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OUTLINES

OF

LIBERAL JUDAISM

FOR THE USE OF PARENTS
AND TEACHERS

BY

CLAUDE G. MONTEFIORE

M.A. (Oxf.), Hon. D.D. (Manchester)

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since this book was first published, more than eleven years have elapsed. It has been out of print for some time, and is now reissued with a few corrections and a very few additions. The writer's views have not greatly changed in the last decade, and it seemed on the whole best to leave the general plan of the book unaltered.

Since 1911 Liberal Judaism in England has become more definitely organised, and (I hope) a more powerful religious force. There is, it is true, only one Liberal Jewish Synagogue, but that one maintains the cause of Liberal Judaism with emphasis and ardour. There is in London one other Synagogue—it is large, wealthy and important—which, though not avowedly Liberal, is yet "Reform." It may, however, be questioned whether there is really room in Judaism for more than two main directions or types, one distinctly "Orthodox," "Traditional," or "Conservative" (whichever word is preferred), one distinctly Liberal. No Synagogue can, in the long run, maintain a strong and vigorous life which does not teach, depend upon and cherish certain *doctrines*, and these doctrines must form an

harmonious and homogeneous whole. There are two such " wholes " which are available and possible: one is Orthodox Judaism, and one is Liberal Judaism. I hardly think that (for England at any rate) there is a third. And if a Synagogue is in a small minority here, it must draw strength by feeling itself part of a much bigger life outside. Our one Liberal Synagogue is conscious that it is allied with other manifestations of Liberal Judaism elsewhere. It is a unit in a larger society. It represents a common cause which is represented more powerfully beyond the seas. It may be doubted whether a Synagogue, however large, wealthy and important, and however ably staffed, which stands by itself, and is not a frank and ardent representative of either Conservative or Liberal Judaism, is not very severely handicapped, and can look forward to increasing influence and power. Liberal Judaism does not mean identity of outward forms. The forms, the details of public worship, constitute only a very secondary part of it. Its essence and life are its ideas, its teaching, its doctrines. Two Liberal Synagogues might have very different forms, the one much more "advanced," the other much more " traditional," and yet both might be equally Liberal in doctrine, in hope, in sympathy. If Reform means only a few externalities, it can scarcely expect a future of much significance. Still less can it expect such a future if it seeks to take its stand upon Pentateuch and Bible as against Talmud and Rabbinism. The days of a

supposed " Mosaism " are over. It is possible that the Reform Synagogue might prosper more if it were more closely allied with the main Orthodox body and with Orthodox Judaism, but it is even more probable that it would flourish more if it were more closely allied with Liberal Judaism, and if, without changing one of its beloved externalities, it became, like the Synagogue of which Rabbi Mattuck is the honoured spokesman and chief, an avowed and articulate representative and champion of the Liberal Jewish cause.

It should be added that, though my ties with the Liberal Jewish Synagogue are very close, this book is, nevertheless, not in any way to be regarded as an official deliverance. It still only expresses my own personal views, though, as I said eleven years ago, I hope and believe that my words " represent a considerable mass of average Liberal Jewish opinion."

This Second Edition has been provided with an Index, which is the work of my old friend, Miss Dorothy Bloxam of Miss Petherbridge's Secretarial Bureau.

C. G. M.

June 1923.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The origin and occasion of this book are sufficiently explained in the Introduction. I have indicated where what I say must be taken, in a stricter sense, as my own personal view only. Elsewhere, though no one but myself is responsible for my words, I fancy that they represent a considerable mass of average Liberal Jewish opinion. But this opinion has, in England at any rate, not yet found its expression in any clear and comprehensive form.

There is, I believe, a certain amount of perplexity among many Liberal Jewish parents as to the religious education of their children. What are these children to be told? Other parents too there are who, though they cannot conscientiously say to themselves that they still adhere to the old conservative opinions of their ancestors, and who therefore do not feel that they can conscientiously teach their children, or let them be taught, on the old lines, are yet uncertain as to what Liberal Judaism actually is. They are unable to retain the old; they are not yet sufficiently acquainted with the positive doctrines of the new. I hope that this book may tell them what Liberal Judaism believes and affirms quite as much

as, and even more than, it incidentally tells them what it denies or discards. It is the affirming and positive side of Liberal Judaism that I am anxious to speak of and elucidate. I have heard even Conservative Jews praise Judaism because it is so simple. But truth is more usually complex than simple ; at all events it is rather rich than poor. A simplicity which is simple because there is so very little of it, because it is meagre and bare and bald, is not a simplicity which should commend itself to us, or which is likely to evoke religious enthusiasm and devotion. Liberal Judaism, at any rate, as I venture to think, is not simple in *that* sense at all. It contains enough doctrine and doctrines for a man to live with, and to live by ; enough to take hold of and to care for ; enough to arouse self-sacrifice and to produce holiness.

Though within the limits of space (and I purposely did not want to publish a big book) I have touched on the chief distinctively religious doctrines of Liberal Judaism, I have almost wholly omitted its *ethical* doctrines. And this is a very big omission indeed, especially in a book about Judaism, where the religious and the moral are so closely related and intertwined. The ethical and ceremonial side of the Jewish religion is admirably set forth, though from a somewhat different point of view, in Mr. Morris Joseph's excellent book, *Judaism as Creed and Life*. I have again referred to this work on p. 241. Though, as I have said, Mr. Joseph writes from a point of

view which is less pronouncedly liberal than my own, there are no Liberal Jewish parents who would not obtain much suggestion and help from him in the matters which I have either omitted altogether, or dealt with in the briefest possible way.

Finally, I desire to state that the larger portion of my book was read and criticised by a number of Jewish friends, of whom all but one share my own Liberal opinions. This common faith did not, however, prevent them from making a number o corrections, criticisms and suggestions, many oi which I have silently adopted, while, in other cases, I have quoted what the critic actually said. The critics consisted both of women and men, but I have spoken of them all alike in the masculine gender. I am greatly indebted to them for their patient kindness. My readers will be indebted to them too. One of them, moreover, was good enough to read through the whole book, except the last two chapters, in proof, and on this occasion also to make several valuable suggestions, almost all of which have been incorporated into the text.

C. G. M.

28*th December* 1911.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is due (unknown to him) to an honoured friend. One day, as we talked about Judaism and Liberal Judaism together, he said to me something like this: "As far as I am concerned, my own religious views and opinions are much the same as yours. Perhaps" (he was good enough to add) "you have even helped to mould them. At any rate there would be, I fancy, no important differences between us. But I am not inclined—I do not think it possible or desirable—to impart these ideas to my children. I should like to bring them up as I was brought up myself, and to teach them what I was taught. The religious ideas which you and I hold to be true are not, in my opinion, capable of being conveyed to children. They must be acquired in late adolescence, or even in manhood and womanhood. If you attempted to teach children on your lines (which are also, I admit, my lines), the result would be failure. They could not understand the ideas, for the ideas cannot be watered down to suit their minds. Children need simple teaching, but it must also be clear and definite. The distinction between this thing and that thing must be sharp and distinct. It is no good telling them that something is partly white and partly black: adults can

appreciate such teaching, children cannot. Our fathers had no trouble about such questions as Inspiration, Revelation, Miracles. The Bible was wholly different in kind from every other book, and it was good and true from one end of it to the other. God really came down on Mount Sinai, and he really spoke the Ten Commandments: what the Bible tells us happened, really happened. Our duty, we were told, is contained in the Laws of the Pentateuch: we have only to observe all those laws (so far as, outside of Palestine and after the fall of the Jewish state, they were meant to be observed) and we shall all be happy and good. Such teaching children can appreciate and understand and profit by: it is clear cut, it is definite. But your religious ideas, just because they cannot, I fear, be completely transferred to the mind of a child, would not work for righteousness and holy living and for an ardent faith in God. Instead of definite certainties you would substitute vagueness, blurred outlines, half-lights and shadows. Instead of white and black, easily discerned and distinguished, you would put before the unfortunate child various shades of grey, fading into one another. Instead of simple and concrete statements he would be offered perplexing and dubious abstractions. Moreover, one needs a certain body, a certain mass, a certain toughness, if I may so express myself, in what one tells to children. Simple, yes, but enough. In your Liberal Judaism there is not enough. It has not (I speak as one who believes in it) adequate material for the child. It is too gauzy and compressible. There is not enough to believe or to do. And I fear we must allow for shrinkage when

the child is grown up. He will learn to cast off soon enough: he will learn to doubt soon enough. The spirit of the age will look after that; we need have no fears on that score. But let us be careful that, when the shrinkage begins, there is something to shrink; and that when the shrinkage is complete, something is still left over. It always seems to me that Liberal Judaism is a philosophic religion, and though it is in itself none the worse, perhaps all the better, for that, I shall not be easily persuaded that the child's intelligence can master religious lessons conveyed in the abstract shape of a philosophy as readily as in the concrete stories of the Bible. The stories in the Bible about God's outward actions are to you and me largely legendary, yet if told to a child, as if they had actually occurred, they seem to me the most powerful and efficacious way of bringing him to a firm belief in God's existence, and of showing him his duty, as a Jew, towards God. Bible stories are object lessons; they are almost tangible proofs of God to the mind of a child. These proofs may be safely rejected later on when the intelligence can itself provide firmer grounds for faith. For though we may be the heirs of all the ages, children's minds are much the same in one generation as in another. It is only when their mental powers grow, that they can take advantage of the results of the newest science or of the latest criticism.

"*Finally, I fear that if we teach our children Liberal Judaism, they will not want to teach their children any Judaism at all. Start a child with semi-orthodox Judaism, and he may pass on to Liberal Judaism when*

he grows up. Start him with Liberal Judaism, and he will, likely enough, fall away from Judaism (though not necessarily from Theism) altogether. So while my own religion is, I admit, Liberal Judaism, it shall not be, even if (which I deny) it could be translated into the thoughts and language of childhood, the religion of my children. They shall be brought up, even as I was brought up, in the older Judaism of our fathers."

I listened to my friend in patience and silence (I ought perhaps to state that he did not really make so long a speech as I have put into his mouth), and then I said to him: "So you would teach your children, or have them taught by others, many things which you yourself disbelieve?" "Yes," he replied, "I would."

This frank avowal of a strange position gave me as much to think about as the no less frank criticisms of the supposed liberal Jewish difficulties in the matter of early religious education.

For let us see what my friend's decision implies. My friend's children are to be taught exactly as he was taught, whether by himself or by others. But does not my friend forget that when his parents or their representatives taught him, they believed what they taught, whereas "ex hypothesi" when he or his representatives teach his children, he in any case, and the representatives very probably, will not believe all that they teach? And does he think that the process which proved, as all his friends hold, so eminently satisfactory in his own case, will prove just as satisfactory in the case of his children?

Moreover, the theory of "allowing for shrinkage"

is of doubtful educational validity. It is not necessary or possible to tell a child all that you would tell an adult, but what you do tell him should not need uprooting. A child is taught the four simple rules of arithmetic and not the binomial theorem, but the four rules remain with him for all his life ; he has not to discard them when he grows up. In religion as in arithmetic there should, so far as possible, be nothing to unlearn. The foundations should be well and truly laid, and the superstructure should be built upon their basis. If part of what we teach has to be rejected, it is quite probable that the whole may be rejected. The child, finding that he has been misled, that he has been expected to believe and do what he may, or even ought to, discard as he grows in maturity, is not likely to be well disposed towards a fresh set of beliefs and acts which do not so much grow out of the former set as they supersede, and sometimes even contradict, them.

For other reasons also is it probable that the methods and process of my friend's religious education and growth are capable of being successfully repeated in his children ? My friend was taught a semi-orthodox Judaism, and gradually became a Liberal Jew ; his children are also to be taught a semi-orthodox Judaism, and are gradually to become Liberal Jews. But though in a certain sort of half-hearted way my friend may impart to his children the religious education (including the beliefs which are the really important and fundamental thing) that was imparted to him, he cannot duplicate the whole environment. He cannot reproduce 1872 in 1912. It is forty years too late.

And the new environment, the new atmosphere, with all that these imply, will not make it possible for the old education (even forgetting for the moment by whom it is given) to produce the old results. I will not, for I cannot, predict what the results will be. But they cannot, and they will not, be the same. "The spirit of the age will look after that."

So my doubts as to the feasibility and the wisdom of my friend's decision led me to meditate upon the grounds of his conception that Liberal Judaism was so wholly unadapted and unadaptable to children—that even if you would, you could not teach it to them, and that if you could, it was not desirable that you should.

Liberal Judaism must be able, I said to myself, to do better than teach another sort of Judaism to its children, and then expect them to become Liberal Jews, by a happy intellectual process, of themselves. For this happy intellectual process was (as I have already observed) not always likely to take place. The awakening might lead away from Judaism altogether. Believing in Liberal Judaism as I do, believing in it keenly, warmly, enthusiastically, I felt that Liberal Judaism must be capable of being adapted to the minds and the hearts of our children. The difficulties, which my friend put forward, were, I said to myself, not unreal, but not insoluble. They were real, but they were exaggerated. In a great deal which Liberal Judaism has to say there need be, I felt, no vagueness, or blurred outlines, whatever. There can be, and there should be, clearness, assurance, earnestness, intensity. Again, if you start with the truth (as you believe it) from the beginning,

the supposed difficulties will be greatly diminished or even wholly disappear. I am not even sure that children cannot distinguish grey, as well as white and black. The modern methods of teaching them secular subjects assume that they can. In English history, for example, they are no longer taught to regard certain characters as bogies, altogether black, and others as angels, altogether white. They are asked quite early to realise that grey predominates. And so with the truth of events : they are led to understand that much of the early records in English history is neither every word true nor every word false. Hence I am not sure, I thought, that children could not understand if one told them from a very early stage that a certain book was a combination and a mixture. I am not sure, I said to myself, that the difficulty of telling a child : " This book is perfectly good and true and wise and divine from cover to cover," and then having to explain away this, to refuse to explain that, and to palliate or prevaricate about the other, was not graver and more dangerous than to tell a child from the first that this book is very good, but not all good, very noble, but not all noble, and so on. I am not sure, I said to myself, whether I cannot show a child that as in man himself there is a " divine image," and as some men are very good and noble (in virtue of that divine image and through the divine help which they receive), so too as regards their products and the books which they write, some (by the divine help which they receive and through the " divine image " within them) are very noble and very good likewise. But as no man is perfect, so no book

is perfect. Could one not tell children, I thought, that as our very language has had a history, so our goodness and our ideas about right and wrong have had a history, and that God teaches us slowly and by degrees, and that our great-grandchildren may know more than we know ourselves, or, at all events, may know differently? We believe in the gradual education of the human race.

Again, I felt that my friend was the victim of a very common misconception. He imagined that Liberal Judaism was, as it were, obtained from Orthodox or Conservative Judaism by a process of subtraction. Thus, if x equals Orthodox Judaism, and if y equals Liberal Judaism, he imagined that $y + z = x$, *in which simple equation z is the amount which, being subtracted from Orthodox Judaism, turns it into Liberal Judaism, or being added to Liberal Judaism, turns it into Orthodox Judaism. But this idea is to do grave injustice to Conservative and Liberal Judaism alike. Both are wholes, organic wholes. You cannot add something to the one and turn it into the other, you cannot subtract something from the second and turn it into the first. The body, the contents, of Liberal Judaism are not much less, if at all less, large than the body or contents of Conservative Judaism; only they are different. The faith of the one is as positive, and covers as much ground, as the faith of the other; only it is different. There is indeed much that is common to the two, but nevertheless they form distinct and separate wholes, and the one is as affirmative as the other.*

As these thoughts crowded into my mind, I became more and more convinced that my friend was wrong,

and that his faith in Liberal Judaism and its possibilities was not yet sufficiently comprehensive or ardent. Then the idea came to me : " Could you yourself do anything to show that he is wrong ? " And the present book is the result.

Here I would like to stop my Introduction, and to let the book speak for itself. But I am bound to give a little further explanation.

It was rather unfortunate for me, and still more unfortunate for Liberal Judaism, that any pioneer attempt of this kind should be placed upon my shoulders. For, in the first place, pioneer work is sure to have many weaknesses, inadequacies and errors. And secondly (more important still) I happen to be neither good at, nor experienced in, writing for children. When I say " children " I mean people of the ages from eight to fifteen. I wrote a first draft of my proposed book, and I printed it and showed it to a dozen selected judges. But they told me, and indeed it was apparent to myself, that only the first two or three chapters were suited to children between eight and fifteen.

Now this fact did not prove that I was wrong, and that my friend was right. It did not prove that Liberal Judaism was not capable of being adapted to children. It only proved that I was myself more suited and fitted to write for " young persons " from fifteen to eighteen than for children from eight to fifteen. And perhaps I am most of all suited to speak to parents. I have had the great pleasure of being told that my " Bible for Home Reading " has proved useful to parents in their Bible talks with their children. They have taught on my lines,

but they have made me more intelligible and easy. It is the same sort of thing which I hope may be the case in the present book. It is the same sort of gift which I offer. I hope that parents and teachers may teach Liberal Judaism along the lines, and according to the suggestions, made to them in this book, but that they will adapt and translate, wherever necessary, my language and thoughts into a language and into thoughts more suited for younger children. It will, however, I am confident, still be Liberal Judaism which they will thus impart to the children, even though couched in different wording, and even though, if I may use the term, it is watered down to the comprehension of a child. Perhaps upon the basis, or upon the suggestions offered by this attempt of mine, some one more skilled and practised in teaching, as well as more learned in the knowledge of child nature, may write a book on Liberal Judaism which could be fitly and usefully placed in the hands of children between eight and fifteen. Rome was not built in a day, and manuals of Liberal Judaism cannot be expected too quickly. The Liberal Judaism of to-day is, I admit, very young. But it has a long career before it. For it has come to stay. The right books for parents, as well as the right books for older and for younger children, can only be produced upon the ruins of many failures and immaturities. And if my book should merely be one of these, it will nevertheless have been worth while to write it, and it will nevertheless have had its place. It will at least be a step in the right direction, a needed stage in the proof that my dear and honoured friend was wrong.

CHAPTER I

FIRST NOTIONS ABOUT GOD AND WHY WE BELIEVE IN HIM

A book on religion, whether for parents or for young people, ought really to be written by an author gifted with a philosophic mind and with wide philosophic knowledge. For it is only such an one who will properly know what to include and what to omit; and in what order to say what he wants to say. But unfortunately the last thing in the world that I can claim to possess is philosophic knowledge, and still more unfortunately the philosophic mind—the mind which sees a subject as a whole, and which sees at the same time its articulated parts in their right order, arrangement, cohesion—is far above, and far removed from, my own.

This book, then, is anything but a systematic treatise on religion, or on Judaism, or on Liberal Judaism. It will only deal with a few important subjects here and there, and the order in which they are dealt with will, I fear, be open to much criticism and objection. It will be a very unsystematic book, I am afraid, and will only too clearly reveal the unphilosophical mind of its writer. Perhaps it should most fitly be called: "Rough notes and suggestions on Liberal Judaism for the use of parents and teachers." If there be a philosopher who is also an adherent of Liberal Judaism, I hope he may be induced to write for us a really philosophical text-book

before his life's work is over. My book could then be thrown into the fire.

I, therefore, propose to plunge into the heart and centre of the subject in my very first chapter. Here, then, is the sort of thing which I suggest that parents and teachers might say to children in their early talks to them about God. Perhaps I should add that one of my critics thinks that even in my very first chapter my ideas are too hard for a child. He says: "It appears to me that the wholly impersonal conception of God as 'goodness and truth' is beyond a child's comprehension. The statement that 'man is more alive than the cat,' because he feels, wills and thinks more, as well as more deeply and keenly, than the cat,' will convey nothing to a child, because his conception of what 'being alive' means is wholly different from yours." I venture very humbly to differ from my critic. But it will be for the parent and the teacher to explain the conception of "being alive," in my sense of the words, more fully to the child.

We have all, I hope, every now and then, done what we knew to be right. Sometimes it was rather difficult or disagreeable, but when the difficult or disagreeable deed was over and done, we felt glad. Sometimes, again, we have all, I fear, done what we knew to be wrong. And when the deed was done, we felt uncomfortable and sorry. We were in no doubt either as to the good or as to the evil deed. We were quite sure that the one was right and the other wrong. Perhaps the good deed was doing something which our father or mother had told us to do; perhaps the bad deed was doing something which our father or mother had told us not to do. We have learnt from them that we ought to obey

them, and we are sure that what they bid us do is right for us to do, and what they tell us not to do is wrong for us to do.

How do *they* know, or how did they learn, what is good for us to do? How, more generally, did men and women learn to say that some things are good and right to do, while some things are bad and wrong? How do they, as we say, both *know* it and *feel* it? For when we do right we both *know* and feel that we have done right, and when we do wrong, we both *know* and *feel* that we have done wrong. How, then, did men and women get this *knowledge* and this *feeling*?

The answer is, I think: *in many ways*,—but there is one way that was *behind*, or rather *in*, all the other ways. It is the answer which is given not only by our religion, but by almost all the great religions of the world.

That answer is that outside of, and beyond, and over and above, our human goodness and our human knowledge, there is another much better goodness and another much greater knowledge, and that this better goodness and this greater knowledge are the cause and source of our smaller goodness and smaller knowledge.

We speak of good and bad; we speak of false and true. We are sure that it is good to be just and kind; we are sure that two and two make four. How have we become sure? and why are we sure now? The final answer, I repeat, is because there is a goodness and a truth which have always been, and will always be, and because this larger goodness and truth are the source and origin and condition of ours. Or, we can leave out the little word "a," and say, the final answer is because goodness and truth

have always been, and will always be. Because they have always been, and are now ; not only on the earth (where we live), but everywhere.

Now this goodness and truth, or this goodness and knowledge, which we believe always have been and always will be, this goodness and knowledge which we believe are the source and cause of *our* goodness and *our* knowledge, and the reason why we are sure that it is right to be good and just and kind, and why we are sure that two and two make four,—this goodness and truth (or goodness and knowledge) we call by the short, simple name : *God*. The word God has only three letters but it is the greatest word in our language ; it is the greatest and the most awful word in any language. But it is not only the most awful. It is also the most tender, the most loving and the best. For that which this short word God means to us we feel the deepest awe, but also the deepest love. We revere God and we love him.

I have said that the good and the truth which are above and beyond our goodness and truth are called by us God. But now I want to say at once one other thing which we believe about God. There will be several other things to say later on.

We often say that some things are alive, and others are not alive. For instance, we say of a stone that it is not alive, but of a growing daisy that it is alive. Whether we are right to say of a stone that it is not alive, I am not *quite* sure, but at any rate it is not alive in the same sense and in the same way as a growing daisy.[1] Let me run through a few

[1] One of my first critics wrote that this last sentence, however up to date in its science, would be wholly unintelligible to a child, and that if the child were nervous, it might even give him night-terrors without doing him the least good. But another critic assures me that "this sort of thing is quite commonly taught now in science lessons to young children."

things which we should all say were alive ; some moss, a daisy, a gnat, a fish, a sheep, a cat, an elephant, a man !

Which is more alive, the moss or the fish ? I think, the fish. Which is more alive, the fish or the cat ? I think, the cat. Which is more alive, the cat or the man ? I think, the man. Does the moss feel ? I do not know, but surely not in the same way as the fish does. But the fish feels, I believe, less than the cat, and the cat feels less than the man.

Moreover, man does much more than feel. He wills (as when we *will*, however difficult it may be, to learn a particular lesson), he thinks, he reasons. Does not the cat *will* ? Does not the elephant *think* ? I am inclined to think so, but they do not will or think so much or so clearly as man. Although I have never been a cat or an elephant, I yet believe that I am right in having said this, and that I have not been unjust to the elephant or to the cat. Now I said before that, in my opinion, man was more alive than the cat. Why so ? Because man feels, wills and thinks more, and feels, wills and thinks more deeply and keenly, than the cat. By this I mean that the *amount* which he thinks and wills and feels is greater than the *amount* of thought, will and feeling of which the cat is capable, and that the *quality* of his thought and will and feeling is keener and deeper.

We men, women, and children are not only " good," and we not only possess " knowledge," but we are also *alive*. Indeed I do not think that goodness and knowledge can be other than alive. Dead goodness and dead knowledge are a combination of words without real meaning.

Now I said that men are good and possess

knowledge because, above and beyond man, there is a goodness and a knowledge enormously better and greater than man's, which we call God. Just as man is not only good and possessed of knowledge, but also alive, so we believe that God is not only good and possessed of knowledge, but also alive. And just as man is more alive than the cat because he feels, wills and thinks more, and more deeply and keenly, than the cat, so we believe that God is more alive than man, because he feels, wills and thinks more, and more deeply and keenly, than man. Just as we believe that the source or cause of our human goodness and knowledge is God, so we believe also that the source and cause of our human *aliveness* is God. God is the source, or fountain, not only of goodness and knowledge, but also of life. He is perfect goodness, perfect knowledge and perfect life.

Two more points about God and man before I close this chapter—both points about which I must speak again, but which I should like just briefly to mention now.

I spoke about a gnat, a sheep, a cat and an elephant. We saw that while we felt sure that they all can *feel*, we were not so sure how far they could will and think. Let me put it to you in this way, or ask you this further question. Can a gnat do right or do wrong? Has a gnat knowledge? Can we, except jokingly, speak of a wise gnat or a foolish gnat? If we cannot speak of a wise or foolish gnat, we can surely (you might urge) speak of a wise or foolish elephant. And surely we can speak, if not of a good or bad gnat, at all events of a good or bad dog. If a gnat cannot do right or wrong, at all events a dog can. But the truth is that the question of the

wise and foolish elephant, and the question of the good and bad dog, are not so simple as they seem. I cannot speak about the matter here, except to say just this, that the wisdom of the elephant and the goodness of the dog have probably come to them (at least in great part) from their life with man. It is we who have taught them to become what we think may rightly be called wise and good.

Let us then put aside for the present the dog and the elephant (and a few other animals who live with man). Let us compare man for the moment with the gnat, the toad and the squirrel, or even with the ant, the beaver and the bee. Of these animals we may, I think, say that they never do what they *know* to be right, and that they never do what they *know* to be wrong, and that, in man's sense of the word, they have neither knowledge nor ignorance. But man seems not only to rise above the gnat and the bee, but also to fall below them. For if he knows that he knows, he also knows sometimes (as when he refuses to learn his lessons) that he is wilfully ignorant. If he does what he knows to be right, he also does what he knows to be wrong. In a sense this is true ; still to be able to be *both* wise and foolish is better than to be neither : to be able to do both right and wrong is better than to be able to do neither. To want to do the right, and sometimes also to want to do the wrong, is better than neither to want to do the right nor to want to do the wrong. For this would mean that we were like our friend the gnat, namely that we had no notion or knowledge of right and wrong at all. But it would seem that for man it was a *condition* of his gaining knowledge that he should also, if he chose, be free to be ignorant, and it was

a *condition* of his learning to do right that he should also be *able* to do wrong, and that he should occasionally do it.

The word *condition* is hard: perhaps some parents and teachers may think of an easier word. Perhaps its meaning would become clearer if one were to tell children that it is a *condition* of our learning to walk that we should occasionally tumble down, and that it is a *condition* of our learning to hit the ball at lawn tennis that we should occasionally miss it.

But the highest thing of all, the highest nature of all, would be if one had perfect knowledge of what was good and right, and if one always did, always *wanted* to do, and even always only *could* do, what was good and right. This highest thing of all, this highest nature of all, belongs only to one. It belongs to, or rather it is, God. He has or is complete knowledge: he always does, always wants to do, and always only can do, the right and the good.

I dare say that you will find the words "always only can do" rather hard. Can even God be good, you will say, if he always only *can* do good? Are we not good just because, though we can do wrong, we do not do it, but do what is right and good? I may be able to say something about this difficulty later on.

One more point about God, and it is this. Some birds are flying in the air as I write. There was a time when these birds were not alive, and there will be a time when they will be alive no longer. And so far as *our* life *on earth* is concerned, we may say: there was a time when we were not yet alive, and there will be a time when we shall be alive no longer. But of the source of goodness and know-

ledge and life whom we call God, we believe that there was no time when he was not alive, and that there will be no time when he will cease to be. He is what men call *eternal*—both forwards and backwards. And if eternal, then also always the same. He did not grow, as we grow ; he does not decay, as we decay. As he was, so he is ; as he is, so he will be.

CHAPTER II

HOW WE AND OTHERS HAVE LEARNED WHAT WE NOW KNOW OR BELIEVE ABOUT GOODNESS AND GOD

In this chapter I shall, I fear, be terribly discursive, but I hope that I may start some lines of thought which may be useful to parents and teachers.

I am inclined to think that we may fairly early explain to children a useful difference between what we may call our beliefs about God and our knowledge (or experience) of God. We very frequently use the word "belief" as if it were the same as "knowledge" or "experience." It is, however, useful and helpful on some occasions to make and to recognise a difference and a distinction between them. Or we may, if we please, call our knowledge and experience of God our faith in God, and so distinguish between faith and belief.

What I am trying to indicate is the following. We learn about God from our parents and teachers. They tell us what we are to believe about God and of our relations to him and of his relations to us. But these beliefs, as we accept them from our parents and teachers, are only the beginnings of religion, and of our "knowledge," or our experience, of God, or of our faith in him. They are the material upon which, or through which, knowledge, experience and faith may concurrently or subsequently arise. We accept these beliefs, but they

are not yet part and parcel of ourselves. They must lead the way to something more personal and intimate,—something more truly religious. They must lead the way to something which we feel and realise and experience ourselves, which answers to our own needs, which gives us satisfaction, and then these transformed and sometimes transmuted beliefs have become, or are becoming, our faith. The religion of a man is not, in the truest sense of the word, something outside him or something which he has "learnt," but it is part of himself, it is a part of his own feelings, convictions, experience. We do not know God in the same sense as we know that the leaves of a tree are green, or that two and two make four, but yet we may fairly speak of a knowledge of God, so far as God answers to our deepest moral needs, so far as we "realise" him in prayer, so far as we cannot explain the world or ourselves without him, so far as we are inwardly convinced of his existence and his influence.

Would it not then be possible for a teacher to explain to children that what he tells them about God, the beliefs concerning him which he asks them to hold, will, he hopes, lead them on gradually to find God and realise God for themselves? Could the teacher not tell them that our true "religion" is just this finding out, that it is nothing without this individual experience, which they must all look forward to and hope for? They cannot be "religious" all at once, but by humility, by goodness, by prayer, they may hope to become so. The teacher can tell them that each of us can and does learn from the teachings and the recorded experiences of those who have gone before us and of those who are older and wiser and better than we. The faith of others reduced to language, the experience of others recorded in words, form the material for our own beliefs, and the

starting-points for our own experiences, our own faith. This faith has to grow and does grow, just as our character and our knowledge grow. It is an inward process which the teacher can help (or hinder), but which he cannot put into anybody else as a doctor can inject a drop of morphia into our skin, or as a dose of physic can be forcibly poured down our throats. Faith must grow up within us and become a part of ourselves. "Beliefs" can be accepted upon authority, —and at first we do so accept the dicta of our parents and teachers—but our faith must be our own, tested and approved by our own inward experience. Faith represents our own convictions; not merely or mainly the convictions of others.

Thus our children can and should be taught that in religion they have something to do themselves. They have something to look forward to. They have gradually to transform the "beliefs" we give them into their own personal faith. In the process of this transformation, as it goes on from age to age and from generation to generation, faith itself, and the beliefs in which it can be expressed, become gradually modified and readjusted. Of this too some explanation can be given. I think that we might talk about all this, and about the origin of our "beliefs" and of our "faith," somewhat as follows.

I WONDER if the question has ever come into your minds: How did each generation of men—our fathers, our grandfathers, our great grandfathers and so on—get to know about, and acquire their faith in, God? The answer is complicated and difficult. But it will here be enough to say that this knowledge and this faith have come both from without and from within. From without: that is to say, from

nature, from other persons, from books. From within: that is to say, from experience, from reflection, from thought. We are all taught in this double way. We all learn in this double way. And we acquire, we obtain, our religion in this double way as well.

Before going farther I want you to realise that our religion or our "faith," in the truest and best sense of these words, is something very inward, very specially our own. I shall often speak of our "beliefs." I shall often speak of "believing" this and that. But when we want to be very accurate, we must not mix up "beliefs" with "faith," as if they were of necessity one and the same. Our beliefs make our faith, but they are not the same thing as our faith.

When your parents tell you, when I venture to ask you, to believe this and that about God, I hope you will accept what we say and believe it. And gradually, I hope that these beliefs will become your faith. God will reveal himself to you. You will not believe in him, or this and that about him, because I or your parents tell you that such is *our* faith, but you will, I hope, believe it because you will gradually become yourselves *convinced* of it, because it will be in various ways *experienced* by you, because it will be *realised* by you as assuredly real and true. *Our* faith will, though perhaps with some changes which your thoughts and experience and study will suggest to you, become not only *your* belief, but *your faith*, your own intimate, personal, individual religion. This is what you must look forward to, and what I hope (goodness and humility and prayer all helping) you, with God's assistance, will achieve.

And now I want to come back to what I said

about knowledge being acquired from without and from within—a statement which holds about religious knowledge and about other kinds of knowledge as well. One result of this fact that knowledge comes from within as well as from without is that each of us, as we grow up, adds to, or modifies, if it be only in the smallest and most imperceptible way, what he has been taught by others and what books have taught him. Great men add to, or modify, what they have been taught much more than ordinary men: when I say great men I am here thinking of those who are great in the particular subject of which we are speaking,—great that is, in the knowledge, and also, let me add, in the service, of God. Here we touch upon a great mystery, but also, as I believe, a great truth, which will come before our notice on many occasions. It is this. What great men learn of themselves, they have, partly at least, been taught by God. In one sense it would be true to say, as one of my critics reminds me, that all which men learn is taught them by God, for he is the source and giver of all our powers. But I am thinking of a certain special way in which he may be said to be their teacher. And in this special way it is, I believe, true to say that part of what even *ordinary* people learn of themselves has been taught to them by God. I want you to believe and realise that as God is the source of all our knowledge and goodness, so is he in more senses than one our teacher. But *exactly how* he has been and is our teacher, it is often very hard to explain and to describe.

We all know that men do not believe alike. There are Jews and Christians and Mahommedans and Buddhists and so on. As they have in many respects very different beliefs, all these different

beliefs cannot all be equally true. Moreover, not all Christians believe the same, and not all Jews believe the same.

Does this seem to you very odd? Do you wonder why all men have not the same beliefs? But there is something which you may think much odder still. It is only gradually that any men have come to believe what they believe now. The knowledge or belief which we have about God was only gradually acquired. The goodness which men show and know to-day was only gradually attained. Men had not always the knowledge and the goodness which they have to-day, just as we hope and trust that in another two thousand years men will have more goodness and knowledge than we now possess.

If God, who is so perfectly good and wise, is the source of all our human goodness and knowledge, does it seem very strange to you that the goodness and knowledge (whether of him or of other matters) which we possess to-day should have come to us so very slowly, and should still be so fragmentary and so imperfect? Why have we had ancestors who were savages, and still further back ancestors who were probably little better than animals? Why should we not have started as wise and as good, at all events, as we are now,—or even a great deal better and wiser?[1]

To these questions neither I nor any one else can give clear answers. We can only trust in that perfect goodness and that perfect knowledge whom

[1] One of my judges thinks that I harp far too often and too long upon the difficulty of "savages" and of slow development. He assures me that none of these questions would ever occur to a child, and that, therefore, parents and teachers should not anticipate puzzles which will not come before adolescence, and the full answers to which, moreover, as I myself acknowledge, are not to be found. I am not so sure as to the validity of this criticism.

we call God. We can only learn *how* God has taught men and *how* he teaches them. *Why* he teaches them thus and not otherwise, we cannot, I think, ever find out. It is, in its fulness, a mystery hidden for ever from our minds.[1]

But there is something more wonderful still. It is that within the mind of the most primitive "savage" there should nevertheless have existed the possibility of growth and of immense development. If God chose to make the unfolding of truth gradual, none the less did he, as a wise critic reminds me, make it sure. From the first the possibility was there. Just as in a small seed is the growth which ends in the beautiful flower, so within the most primitive man God implanted the growth-capacity which has been gradually developed, and which will be further developed, towards a noble end.

Nevertheless, though we cannot give a full and clear answer, we may give an answer which may, at any rate, be partly true. For is not (so we might explain to older children) one important characteristic of human beings their power to *make themselves*? The principle of human development and progress seems to be one of the most precious things about humanity. Is it not finer to create a creature that can develop itself than to create one which would require no such self-development? The conscious development of man makes him different from other creatures, and why should we make a difficulty of the point at which development was to start? What we discover for ourselves is more precious to us than the discoveries given to us by others. Animals seem largely made; man is to a larger

[1] The thought and its expression depend here upon that delightful book, *Madame How and Lady Why*, by Charles Kingsley (1869).

extent *self-made* and *self-making*. When, according to one reading of the Hebrew, the Psalmist said, "He made us, and not we ourselves," he did not mean to assert that a man was made once for all, as a marble statue or a wooden doll is made once for all. Man has acquired the consciousness of his own powers; he has gained the wish and will to discover and progress. He walks consciously with God. Each man has to some extent to decipher and unravel the universe afresh. God has placed the incentive within man, so that he must and can, with God's help, work out his own salvation. We know why the best human teachers make their pupils to some extent teach themselves. May not the divine Teacher have reason to teach us in the same way? The greater the knowledge and the faith which we have to acquire, the longer must be the pathway, the more painful the experiences, which are needed to acquire them. From this point of view it is the details which present the difficulties rather than the actual fact.

Men have acquired or learnt their religion gradually, even as they have acquired and learnt their astronomy and geology gradually. Such, I suppose, must be the will of God, or such, if we prefer to put it so, must, in the very nature of things, be the way in which such a being as man has to learn goodness and acquire knowledge.

I have said that we have learnèd a great deal from a few specially great men, from a few specially great teachers. To them God gave, as we must, I think, believe, a special enlightenment, so that they saw further, and saw better, than their fellows into the nature of goodness and into the nature of God.

But here we come once more to something, at

first sight, odd and strange. Even these great men did not see perfectly. Even they made (as we now can see) mistakes. Even they, though they saw *some* truths very clearly, did not see others at all. They were, as men say, in many points, the children of their age.[1] Just in a few very important things, or in some very important matters, did they rise above their age, and see further and see better than the other men of their own land and day. Sometimes they even had, to use a French proverb, the defects of their qualities. For instance, because they were so intensely convinced of the truth and excellence of what they had to say, because they were so utterly sure that it was God who had somehow put these thoughts and words into their minds and mouths, they were sometimes angry with, and ungentle and uncharitable towards, all those who did not agree with them, or who attempted to pick holes in their teaching.

We might wish that there were not these spots in the great men's teachings and characters, but when we think more closely we shall perhaps realise that wholly perfect teaching can never be given through men to men. For though man has gradually become better and better, and will, we believe, gradually become better and better still, no man is, or can be, *perfect*.[2] Only God himself is perfect. And no man

[1] "More generally," says a critic, "men are the children of their environment. Every race has facilities to grasp its own little piece of truth, and is liable to its own variety of error. Hence one national revelation (the summing up of the results arrived at by the greatest minds of a people) has to be compared with other national revelations: *e.g.* Hebraism has to be corrected by Hellenism."

[2] A wise judge rightly observes that parents and teachers must be very careful not (*a*) to damp the enthusiasm of youth, or (*b*) to provide an excuse for laziness. Though man cannot be perfect, he can get nearer and nearer to perfection. No one must say: "Man cannot be perfect: my faults are no worse than those of others." Again, "Hope and imagination," as the judge writes, "make the world go round." Perhaps he is right when he adds: "Do not damp young hope and

could understand perfection. Complete and perfect teaching would, I fancy, be of no use to us. We could not grasp it. It would dazzle us like the sun, and we should see less than before. So in the records of the teaching of the great men, in the laws which they gave, or in the words which they spoke and wrote, there is always some imperfection, and, as time goes on, and man advances in knowledge, we perceive these imperfections more clearly.[1]

But now I want to warn anybody against making what would be a very foolish mistake. If a child of three is put upon the shoulders of a big grown-up man, he can see further than the big man. Suppose now the child were to call out to the big man: "I am taller than you! I am taller than you!" we should smile at the little child's words. Far more absurd would it be if any of us, who live perhaps two thousand or three thousand years after some great teacher, were to say: "What mistakes he made! He was not so *very* great after all. I know better than he!" Nothing would be more absurd than this. Why do we "know better" in any respect than the great teacher of two thousand or three thousand years ago? Just because of the great teacher himself. Because we have, as it were, climbed upon his shoulders, and upon the shoulders of other great men and great teachers who came after him, and so see a little further than they. If it were not for the great men and great teachers

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youthful imagination by urging too forcibly that the whole truth cannot be found. The hope of perfection is for the young: the knowledge of God's mercy is for the old."

[1] One of my judges wrote that this paragraph was too difficult for children. But I think a skilful teacher or parent could present the thought underlying it in simpler words. I am inclined to think that the idea should come early.

whom God has, as we believe, in some mysterious way, specially illumined, where should we now be? Even a beginner in astronomy to-day soon learns more than Copernicus and Galileo and Newton ever knew. But he none the less realises that, if it had not been for these great men, he would not now be able to acquire his knowledge. Even if he becomes quite a distinguished astronomer, he continues to reverence the great men who were the founders and teachers of his science. Even so it is in religion. In some things we may to-day see a very little further than the greatest teachers of the past. But we reverence them none the less; nay, we reverence them all the more. We understand better how much they soared above the *average* teaching and *average* knowledge of their day. We understand better their difficulties. We make allowances for, or pay small attention to, their errors; we see their errors in the light of the times in which these great men lived, or, as I said before, we realise that their errors were but the then inevitable defects of their supreme qualities. And so with the records of their teaching; the books which they wrote or partly wrote, and to which others have added. Here, too, we do not expect to find that there is nothing to which we can add; nothing from which we must subtract; no spots, no defects, no inaccuracies, no errors. The defects we ignore; or we just take them together with the great gift which the past has given us, or, as we may say with equal truth, with the great gift which God, the source of goodness and knowledge, has given us. We are humbly grateful to the great teachers; still more are we humbly grateful to God. When we think of the great teachers we feel our own littleness, and we are duly

and reverently thankful for what God, through them, has given to the world and to ourselves.

We are all aware that even to-day men do not all think and believe alike about God and about goodness. Not everything which you and I believe to be good is believed to be good by all men alive upon the earth to-day. Why God allowed and allows these differences of belief we do not know. Perhaps if all men had always believed the same things, there would have been no incentive to thought and progress. In some cases these differences may not be as deep as we think or as they seem. There are many different ways of looking at the same thing. In a mountainous country the mountains seem different as you look at them from different points of view. Yet the mountains are the same. So some apparent differences of belief may be at bottom no real differences at all. And over great spaces of the wide earth's surface there is much agreement to-day about many important matters. There is a very great deal of agreement about goodness, and there is a very considerable agreement about God.

If we take Europe and America and Australia, we may especially and truly speak of large agreement about goodness, and considerable agreement about God. I, a Jew, write this little book for Jews and Jewesses. The very much larger number of people now living in Europe, America and Australia are not Jews. Very much the larger number are Christians. Not all Christians think alike, and not all Jews think alike, and between Jew and Christian there are important differences of belief, of which you will all learn later. But, in spite of important differences, there are still more important agreements—agreements about goodness, agreements about God.

How have the men of Europe, America and Australia reached and arrived at these agreements? Not from one source only; not, I think, from one people only. Light has shone in through many windows. In different degrees and ways God has illumined the minds of many men of different ages and of several races. We are the heirs of many ages and of many lands.

But a great and most important part of the agreements has come from the teaching given by the great men of one particular race, and that race our own. This fact may make us, in one sense, very proud, but when we know all which this fact implies, it should also make us very humble.

It is the Jews, or rather it is men of Jewish race, who have directly or indirectly been the great teachers of the men of Europe, America and Australia as regards large and important portions of their beliefs—especially their common beliefs—concerning goodness and God. By common beliefs I mean the beliefs which unite them, which they *share* with one another, in which they all, or almost all, agree. Through great Jewish teachers, and through the records of their teaching in a certain collection of books, which is known as "the Bible," this large piece of the world has come, in great part, to its present beliefs and agreements about goodness and God.

Such has been the divine will. What, for instance, I told you in the first chapter, that I, and many who think with me, believe about God and his dealings with man, what I shall proceed to tell of him and of them in chapters still to come, and what you will, as I hope, also believe (only, as I also hope, more clearly and fully, for *you* will stand upon *my*

shoulders, and see a little further than I)—all this is just the putting together and the development of certain teachings given to us from the illumined minds of great Jewish teachers in the days of old. When I say illumined, I mean illumined by God. It is hardly necessary to ask: How have I heard of their teachings, seeing that these days of old were days of long ago, many hundreds and hundreds of years before I was born? I have heard of them largely because I and my immediate teachers have read them in a wonderful collection of books written in the language which our ancestors spoke in those far-off days. This collection of books is known in English as the Hebrew Bible. In Hebrew the collection has no one name for the whole of it. It is called from its three great divisions: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. There will be more to say of this collection of books, and of the great men whose teachings are partly contained therein, in subsequent chapters of the present book.

CHAPTER III

THE GRADUAL GROWTH OF MEN'S IDEAS ABOUT GOD, AND ESPECIALLY IN ISRAEL

One object of the present book is to try to show, if I can, how the modern idea about religious growth can be presented to children, and how the children can be as reverent and as humble on the strength and basis of those ideas as ever they were on the strength and basis of the old ideas, in the light of which we and our fathers received our teaching in our own childhood. More especially am I anxious to prepare the way for modern evolutionary ideas about the Bible, and then to present those ideas in a form suited to the minds and comprehension of children. For, after all, here is the great difference between the old and the new; and here is the great difficulty as it presses itself upon all those who now believe in the new way of looking at the Bible and its contents. We want our children to honour, admire, and love the Bible as much as we loved, honoured, and admired it ourselves. We want them to realise God's part in it as much as we realised it ourselves. And yet we want them to know from the first, so that there may be no shock and revulsion later on, that there are degrees of excellence in the Bible, and that not everything in it is equally true, and good, and pure,—that indeed there are some things in it which for us, with our fuller knowledge of truth and goodness, cannot be called by us either true or good. We want our

children to have nothing to unlearn about the Bible, but simply to go on learning about it on the same lines more and more fully as their years advance. This is the problem. Can it be resolved? I believe that it can, though I readily admit that more than one mind, and probably more than one generation, must contribute their quota before a wholly adequate and satisfactory solution is attained. The sort of things (as I think) which we ought to say, the sort of line (as I think) which we ought to take, are indicated by me in what is now to follow. But I have, I admit, not written down to the level of very young children, and what I have said will need to pass through the mind of the skilful teacher or parent, and to be re-expressed by him in better and more simple words.

BEFORE I say anything more as to how the Jews learnt, and then taught, about goodness and God, I want to start this chapter by saying a few words of how men in general began to learn and think about God and of his dealings (or *relations*, to use a hard but common word) with man and with men. But the subject is so big and so difficult that I shall say a very few words indeed, and shall only just pick out a few points which will be useful for us when we come to the religious history of our own Jewish ancestors.

It was only slowly, very slowly, that men came to believe in God; in *one* God,—one supreme and only divine source of goodness, knowledge and life. Why there should have been this terrible slowness we do not know. Why there should have been these long ages of preparation we cannot tell. So it was, and as it was so, we trust that it was so for the best. One of my critics remarks: "If you were climbing a very high mountain, would you expect to arrive so quickly at the top?" And another writes:

"When we are infants, our lessons are very simple; as we grow up, they get harder. At first we could not understand what we understand later. God teaches man, so it seems, by methods such as ours." [1]

For many ages most men had very strange, and *to us* very childish, and sometimes (as we should call them) elementary, or even degraded, ideas about the forces and the powers outside man. But we must not suppose that many ideas which seem to us foolish or degraded did not give help and comfort, and were not accompanied by reverence and humility, among those who held them and believed them. Early men were puzzled and anxious and frightened about the divine forces and powers which they began to believe existed around them. They did not specially think of these forces and powers as the sources of nothing but benevolence and goodness. They often thought that many of them were mischievous and hurtful and the causes of mischief and of hurt. Nor did they suppose that there was one supreme Power and only one, but that there were many powers, some good and some bad,—many powers with limited power and often at war with one another. They often thought there were "spirits" *in* things, even as we still speak of our "soul" as *in* us. There were spirits in trees and fountains, in the wind and in the fire. Or, again, they thought that some animals were gods, or that certain gods had the forms and shapes of certain animals, and that they protected the animals who were, in some strange sense, their descendants or children. Later on—much later on—many men thought that some gods

[1] A critic reminds me that Maimonides said this very same thing seven centuries ago.

had the shapes and forms of men, only they were more beautiful or bigger, with bodies of more delicate and more permanent materials. Sometimes they thought that the gods had wives and children, just like themselves. They invented goddesses as well as gods. Of some of these gods and goddesses you may have read in books about Greek mythology. And you have doubtless been told that Wednesday and Thursday and Friday contain the names of old Teutonic gods whom the old German conquerors of England worshipped for many ages, while Sunday, Monday, and Saturday recall the time when men believed that sun and moon and stars were alive and were divine. Only very gradually did men come to believe that the gods, or the chief gods, cared greatly about goodness, or that they hated injustice or cruelty or deceit. For a long time men thought that the gods were more powerful than themselves, but hardly that they were more righteous or more loving than themselves. Nevertheless, God was gradually, imperceptibly, preparing the way. He was gradually helping and enabling men, by every advance in goodness and knowledge, to learn a little more about the Power (or, as they supposed, the powers) which was around them and above them.

There were two or three ideas men came to hold about the gods which were of great importance for further developments. Men very early began to suppose that the powers outside and around them could, and often did, benefit them or harm them. At first they thought that these benefits and hurts came, as we say, *capriciously*. By this word *capriciously* I mean that they did not believe that the divine powers sent the benefits and the hurts on any regular plan, or in any just and constant way. They were

not regularly sent to reward human goodness or as a punishment for human vice. They were sent at the mere whim of the particular power concerned. But none the less men tried to acquire the benefits, and to avoid the hurts. They thought that by clever devices they could force or persuade the gods to do what they wanted. They thought they could flatter or cajole them. Or, again, they thought they could give them gifts, and so buy off their wrath and secure their favour. The gods needed food and drink like men, and so men gave them of their possessions: they sacrificed for their benefit sheep and oxen and goats, and they supposed that, in some mysterious and unseen way, the gods ate the flesh and drank the blood of these animals. Gradually they began to believe that the gods cared for justice and goodness, at least to *some* extent, and they offered sacrifices, when they had done wrong, to appease the divine anger. Or they brought their gifts as thank-offerings for benefits received, for good harvests, for plenteous food, for success in war. There would be a great deal more to say about sacrifices, and their origin, and their development, if I were writing a history of them, but I think that these few words are enough for the present occasion and for my present purpose. What we have to bear in mind is that in the very far-off times men thought and believed that the outside divine powers were very many, and that some were inclined to help, and some to harm them. They believed that by sacrifices, and other means, about which I need not here speak, they could win the divine favour and avoid the divine wrath. Next, they began to believe that many or some of these divine powers liked them to do good and punished them when they did evil—though their own ideas

of good and evil, and the ideas of good and evil which they ascribed to the divine powers, were still of a very narrow and limited kind. But out of such imperfect and unsatisfactory ideas men were gradually being educated to higher things. The idea or belief that under ordinary circumstances, and if their own special interests were not concerned, the divine powers, or the most important and the strongest among them, cared for and rewarded good deeds, and disliked and punished evil deeds, was an enormous advance in the religious history of man. Why did God not allow man to start with that idea and belief at once? We cannot tell. Let us *trust* God, and bow our heads in reverent submission. He understands better than we. But we can see that there is a law in mental development as in physical development. The higher knowledge, whether of morality or of the material world, requires long experience, many trials, and much patient thought.

Thus in some such ways as I have here indicated, men grew to think that they could and should *serve* the divine powers. And gradually this idea of service was purified and ennobled. We still believe, and our religion still teaches us, that God can be *served* by man, and that God wants and likes our service. Only we no longer believe that the service which pleases him is giving him presents,—buying his favour by sheep, warding off his anger by oxen. We still believe, and our religion still teaches us, that God rewards and punishes, that he wants us to do what is good and to avoid doing what is evil, though we no longer believe that we can obtain that reward, or buy off that punishment, by gifts and entreaties. Moreover, our ideas of God's rewards

and God's punishments are very different from the ideas held in those far-off days of which we are now speaking.

There was another idea which some men began to hold in far-distant ages about the divine powers, and this other idea also became of great importance and had grand and fruitful consequences. It was this. The divine powers believed in by one race of people were not the same as the divine powers believed in by another race of people. The men of one race were proud of their own gods; they were often inclined to look down upon the gods of another race. Especially if the men of one race were stronger than the men of another race, and conquered them in war, were they inclined to say, "Our gods are stronger and better than your gods." In some races, and in some parts of the world, the idea grew up that the gods of one people particularly looked after that people, and were willing (if duly served and paid) to help them in their quarrels and battles with other peoples. The men of one race would pray to their gods, saying to them: "O god so-and-so" (mentioning his name), "please help us in our fight with our neighbours which we are just going to begin. Please give us the victory. Please come with us to the battle, and fight for us and aid us. If we win, we will give you more sheep and more oxen than you have ever had before, and we will set up your statues in new temples which we will build to you." (For by that time, though I have omitted to say so, men built temples to their gods, and sacrificed their offerings upon special altars, and set up the statues or images of the gods, sometimes in the form of human beings, and sometimes in the form of animals, and sometimes in the form of odd combinations between the two.)

The peoples in old times did not think much whether their quarrels with their neighbours were just quarrels, or whether it was "six of one and half-a-dozen of the other." They assumed that they were always in the right, and that their enemies were always in the wrong.[1] The gods, though in times of peace some of them might be supposed to care for justice and goodness, were not supposed to care much for justice and goodness in war. Then they were only believed to care for victory. It was to their own interests, so it was believed, to protect or help their worshippers. For if their side won, they would have more sacrifices, and more temples, and more glory. But if their side lost, they would have much less of all these good things.

Sometimes, and among some races, there were two or three gods only, who were specially identified with the honour of the race, and among a few races there seems to have been only one such god. He naturally became regarded as a most special guardian and protector. His favour would bring his worshippers victory: his anger—if, for instance, he thought he had been slighted in any way—might account for their defeat.

How strange all these far-off ideas seem to us to-day! Still you will sometimes hear or read of nations who claim, even now, that God is on their side, though it is by no means clear that they have *right* on their side. But, on the whole, we may hope that the kind of ideas which I have just described is

[1] A critic suggests that there may have often been some moral idea involved in these early wars: the idea, namely, of the subjugation of a lower race by a higher one, of barbarism by civilisation. Thus there may have been in other nations the sort of feeling which made the Jews (in the second temple period) think of their pagan foes as equivalent to the wicked. Compare too the feelings of the Greeks to the Persians.

now almost obsolete. Yet they contained the germs of great truths, and through them God helped men to "rise to higher things." He trained men through them. Especially through them and out of them, did he train, so far as we can dimly see, our own particular ancestors.

Through these partly illusory and erroneous ideas God found it necessary and right to train our ancestors to reach up to ideas which we and millions of other men to-day regard as precious and true, and which, as we believe, our descendants will still regard as precious and true. I mean ideas such as the following.

God and man are not so far separated from each other that one has nothing to do with the other. God can have, and does have, *dealings* or *relations* with man, and man can have, and does have, *relations* with God. Again: God can be served by man. *Divine service*, as the words often run, has a meaning. Once more: God has (to put it very simply) likes and dislikes. Where the deeds of man are concerned, he likes deeds of justice and charity, he dislikes deeds of cruelty and deceit. He rewards the deeds of goodness (but *how* is another question); he punishes the deeds of vice (but *how* remains to be seen).

The Hebrews or Israelites or Jews — for our ancestors have been called by all these various names —were only gradually taught the grand truths which now form our religion. They had learned the most important of these truths more than two thousand years ago. But we are still learning, and I hope that we shall learn more and more, and that our religion will continue to grow in greatness and in purity. We shall, I hope, gradually learn more

and more, and better and better, what the truths of our religion mean, *and what they imply*. We have said, for instance, for a long while, and we say to-day: "God is good; God is true." We shall, I hope, gradually learn better and better what those six words mean and imply. We speak to-day of the "brotherhood of man" and how "God is the Father of all men." We shall, I hope, gradually learn better and better what these phrases mean and imply. They will become to us (and to others), not mere phrases upon our lips, but truths in our hearts, truths by which we act and live.

How, then, did our ancestors, in far-off days, learn the great truths which, through them, Europe, America and Australia have learned about goodness and God? They learned them, as God willed, more especially through those old and imperfect beliefs about which I spoke to you a little while ago.

They did not all at once come to believe, they were not all at once taught to believe, that there was only one Divine Power in all the world, for all the world, and above all the world. But the first immensely big step forward was when God made some of them see, or perhaps one great, noble prophet or teacher see, that whatever other races and peoples might believe and do, there was to be for the Israelites one God only to worship and to serve. He was to be not only their *chief* God, but their *only* God. He had no father and no wife and no son. He was alone. He was a stern God who would be angry if any other god than he were served by any member of the race of Israel, or in any corner of Israel's land. But he was not *only* stern; he was also *just and kind*. He would punish the wicked; he would reward the good. He *wished*

men to be good so that he might reward them; he *wished* them not to be wicked, so that he need not punish them.

Then, again, it was an early belief that this one and only God of the Hebrews was stronger than any other god. He was more powerful. But not only was he more powerful, but he was also purer, more *good*. These two ideas, more powerful and more good, produced a third idea of enormous importance. If he was more powerful and more good, what could this mean except that he was more *real*? In what lies the essence of a god, in what his divineness? Surely in power and in goodness. So God taught the earliest great teachers to realise that the God of Israel was more divine and more real than the other gods. They waned; he waxed. They grew more and more unreal; he grew more and more *real*. They sank; either to be regarded as mere half-gods, demons, imps, and spirits of no account and importance, or still lower—as inventions or follies of men, mere nonentities, things of nought, whose images and statues corresponded to nothing at all. The God of Israel was gradually regarded not only as a God *in* Israel, but also *outside* Israel; not merely as *a* divine power which ruled one particular nation, but as *the* Divine Power which ruled the world. So, from being a god he became God, the one and only God, the God with whom nought can be compared because there can be nothing to compare with him. No longer merely good, he became perfect. There is but one universe, and for the One Universe there is and can be only One God. Thus was the long history completed, and a god of a small eastern tribe became the God of humanity and the world.

But a strange and very important thing occurred in the course of this history, and in this strange thing we may, perhaps, see especially the providence and the will of God. Once more we see in this strange thing how God chooses to mingle together the good and the imperfect, and from the imperfect to bring forth a higher good.

Throughout the long history during which the God of Israel became the God of the Universe, he never ceased to be the God of Israel. When for all Israelites, Hebrews or Jews, he was the one and only God, he was none the less, indeed he was all the more, the God of Israel. We shall have later to speak about this fact at greater length. We can see here at once that this double aspect of God contains a great and wonderful truth. For we do believe that the God of the Universe, the one and only God, is also *our* God. He is the God of you and me. Great as he is, he is not too great to be my God, too great for me to pray to him, too great for him to help and care for me. On the contrary: just because he is so great, just because he is so perfect and unique, do we *also* believe that he can be, and is, *also* the God of each individual man.

The God of the whole world still remained then the God of Israel. In some special sense he still remained their God. In some special sense they still remained his people. We shall see later on how far we do, and should, still believe that this continuance was right and true and good. We shall see in what sense the God of the whole Universe may still rightly be called the God of Israel, and in what sense Israel may still be called "his people." We shall see where the idea can be helpful, and how it

can be dangerous: where it can be true, and how it can be false. But for the present I want to pass away from this particular question, and speak about some other points which our ancestors were taught and learnt about God.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNITY OF GOD AND WHAT THE GREAT TEACHERS OF ISRAEL MEANT AND IMPLIED BY IT

In this chapter I begin to set forth the present Jewish doctrine about God, as, from the Liberal Jewish point of view, I conceive it. As I deal here mainly with the divine unity and omnipresence, there is little or nothing with which, I take it, Conservative Jews would disagree. But none the less I have found it extremely hard to write simply, and to say nothing which children of ten or twelve years old would not understand. One of my judges has not only appended the adjective "difficult" to almost every paragraph, but has added: "I hardly think that the doctrine of the Divine Immanence can convey anything to a boy or a girl under sixteen. The few child-like expressions you intercalate here and there cannot simplify the ideas." Parents and teachers may, therefore, not find this chapter of much use except for older children.

I HAVE already indicated that the faith which the Jews held about God, let us say, over two thousand years ago—in great part the same faith which we, their descendants, hold about him to-day—had come to them gradually, or, as we may also put it, had gradually been disclosed and revealed to them. It was not philosophers in their studies who thought

out this faith and the beliefs which the faith implies and wrote them down in books. The faith and the beliefs were largely the work (under God) of great teachers, but these teachers were men who lived among their people: they were not lonely thinkers. The great teachers (as well as the people) were themselves taught about God by what was passing around them, by historical events which agitated and impressed their minds, and from which they drew inferences, and learnt lessons. The teachers were taught by God through life itself.

I cannot here go through the steps of that teaching, or speak of the individual great teachers (the records of whose words we still possess, or rather, of some of whose words we still have fragmentary records). I can only speak of the results.

Let me then mention some of the beliefs and ideas about God which these great teachers, and the experience of history, had impressed upon the minds of our ancestors more than two thousand years ago.

First of all, then, there was the great belief, which has always remained a great and fundamental belief among the Jews from then till now, that God is One. This great belief is what we may rightly call a *rich* belief: that is to say it means and implies much; it does not mean and imply little. It has, as it were, many meanings rolled into one. Hence it was not always the same meaning which was most prominent in the minds of our ancestors, and the meaning which was most prominent to them two thousand years ago is not perhaps the meaning which was most prominent fifteen hundred or a thousand years ago, or the meaning which is most prominent to us to-day. The idea of God's oneness or unity is not, I repeat,

a simple idea, but a rich idea: it does not mean little; it means much. Sometimes the emphasis has been laid upon one side of it; sometimes the emphasis has been laid upon another side of it. Till all men believe in God's oneness, the Jews will always lay special stress upon this great doctrine, and when all men equally believe it, they will still lay stress upon it, as they lay stress, and will always continue to lay stress, upon God's goodness or righteousness. The Unity or Oneness of God became, through a variety of circumstances, the great mark or sign of the Jewish religion, and the saying in the Bible which declares that Unity is regarded by all Jews as the primary teaching of their religion—its foundation in one sense, its crown in another. I mean the saying: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

This saying meant to our ancestors (as also to us) that besides the One God there was no other God. There is one original Divine Power, from eternity and to eternity. He is One, because there is no other God than he, but he is also One, because he is wholly unlike anything else in the world. He is therefore not only One, but also Unique. There is nobody else, there is nothing else, like him, or that can be compared with him. He is alone. There is no other being in his "class." He is not only one; he is the only one. And he is not only one in the sense that there is no other divine power as his partner or his rival, but he is also one in himself. His own nature is a Unity, and there is no Unity, in its perfect Oneness, like unto his Unity. This part of the idea or belief of God's unity is much more difficult, and I do not know that I can explain what our ancestors meant by it very clearly and easily. Nor perhaps did

what they meant by it exactly mean what I mean by it. For the idea is rich, as I said, and not poor, and can properly mean many things, and not merely a few. But I will try and say at once some of the things which I *think* they meant by it, and some of the things which I and other Jews mean by it to-day.

I think they meant by it, for one thing, to imply that God was always the same. He is changeless. He does not grow or wane. He has always been, he will always be, perfect. He has no moods. He is not sometimes this and sometimes that, but he is eternally the same. He is the source of truth and the source of goodness, and being one, his truth and his goodness are changeless and permanent. Again, by his Unity they implied and we imply the following. We imply that he always works upon the same general lines and for the same general ends. His purposes do not vary. He cannot *now* desire the good of his creatures and *now* the evil, but if he is one, then he, being himself good, must *always* desire their good. We speak of a human being as wise and just and kind, and we use these same adjectives of God. I believe that we use them rightly. However immensely greater the justice and wisdom and kindness of God are than the justice and wisdom and kindness of man, they yet cannot be wholly and absolutely unlike. For our wisdom and goodness come from him: he is their source, and what we may call the reality of them is due (in our belief) to the fact that they are akin to, and spring from, the divine goodness and the divine wisdom. But of a man we can say that he is more good than wise, or that he is more wise than good. Or, again, we can say of a man that his kindness gets the better of his justice, or that his sense of justice allows no room for kind-

ness and pity. But because God is One, we can never speak like that of God. Or, if we do, it is merely because we, being human, speak of God in human language. For, in truth, his wisdom and his justice and his kindness are all exactly equal. He is never more just than kind; never more pitiful than just. We may speak humanly of his pity overcoming his justice, but it is inaccurate to speak so. His perfect Righteousness is also perfect Love. For in him every part of his nature harmonises with every other part, and what he does is done from his perfect Oneness and in virtue of his Oneness. He is always wholly just and wholly loving at one and the same time.

Again, we must always remember that the idea of God's unity is not a poor idea, but a rich idea. So we must believe that the nature of God is not poor and thin on account of his Unity, but that it is, on the contrary, surpassingly rich and surpassingly full. We might say that, in a certain sense, our nature, though more rich, is less one than the nature of a gnat or a stone. We sometimes feel happy, sometimes sad, sometimes we feel love, sometimes anger; sometimes we are just, stern, unyielding, sometimes pitiful, kind, forgiving. But God is not only far richer in goodness than we, but he is, in spite of that immense richness, yet wholly one. We may speak of God's justice, kindness, love, pitifulness, and so on. But in reality just because he is one, we believe that all these qualities are always found together, and that they never by any possibility can, at any moment, be at variance or strife. There may be a *conflict*, a struggle, within us which we are sure that there can never be within the gnat. This struggle, this conflict take place because our nature is much richer

than the gnat's. But infinitely richer as is God's nature than our nature, there is never any struggle, never any conflict. There is ever harmony, unity, peace. We may sum up God's nature, so far as he has revealed it to us, and call it wisdom, or we may sum it up and call it righteousness, or we may sum it up and call it love, but it is always one and the same. One nature with many aspects; one nature with many facets. But always perfect harmony; and always, to all eternity, Unity, flawless, perfect and complete. This is what we may believe, this is what our ancestors learnt, and what they have taught us, about God.

The rich and perfect Unity of God is so important and fundamental a doctrine that I would like to illustrate it still further by contrasting it yet again with the imperfect unity of man. Very often the richer a man's nature is, the less one he is. A man who is interested and keen about many things may have a richer nature, but may be less one, than a man who is interested and keen about one thing. A man who is generous and just may be less one than a man who is generous, but not just, or just but not generous. For the generosity may cause a fight with the justice or conflict with it, or the justice may interfere with the generosity. The fuller man may be imperfectly one, because his various qualities may be imperfectly harmonised with each other. But in the case of the Divine nature we believe that its richness and its unity are, to use a long word, *coextensive*: neither is bigger than the other, but each is equal to, and each is adequate for, the other.

The conviction that God is One causes us to acquire other convictions as well. And these other convictions help us to realise the full value of the

doctrine of the Unity. For example, as there is only one God and that God is one, it seems to follow that the universe which God rules and sustains is one also. It must be a universe which, as the phrase goes, "makes for righteousness," even as its divine Lord is himself the source and the perfection of righteousness. Now we know that many events and occurrences on the earth are full of pain and sorrow: much evil and misery exist. But the conviction of God's unity induces us to believe, and comforts us with the faith, that the one, good God *holds* the key, and *is* the key, to all the many riddles of existence. The unity of God makes us reach the faith that the same one God who is the source of goodness is also the controller of sorrow and pain. If he sends us happiness for our good, does he not also send us sorrow? May not both happiness and sorrow, prosperity and adversity, be his messengers, and the instruments of his love?

Again, as God is one, and there is one God only, all we human beings, be our race, our colour and our creed what they may, are all his children, and all (so we may surely believe) are sent here for some good purpose; none is unnecessary, whether of races or of individuals. God's unity makes us humble and makes us brave. We are all his children in spite of our failures and our sins. And just as he loves all, and we love him, so must we love one another. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" are the next words to "the Lord is one." So the next words after the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," are "I am the Lord." Thus the existence and unity of God enfold within themselves both divine and human love. And this love, based upon God's unity, impels us to the certainty that we

must not despise any race or any individuals, for we must fain believe, as an old Rabbi said, that there is no race and no man which have not their place and their hour. God is the father of the good, but he is also the father of the evil. These too he will educate, though perhaps the process may take a very long while, and may have to continue for very long in another life after the life of earth. The Unity of God may be said to range over, and include, almost all the other parts of our faith respecting God's dealings and relations with mankind. Everything seems to turn upon it; all goes back to it; all flows out from it. No wonder, then, that our forefathers felt that this doctrine of God's unity was so central and so sacred that sooner than abandon it, sooner than admit any weakening or impoverishment of it, they would suffer, and they would die.

The doctrine of the Unity of God grew up among the Jews amid conflict and struggle. The doctrine bore for long, perhaps it still to some extent bears, the marks of that struggle. There was, first, the conflict of the great teachers with the mass of the people, who only with great difficulty, and after many troubles, were induced to give up the worship of many gods and a false worship of the true God. Secondly, there was the conflict of the whole people, now become ardent believers in the One God, with the worshippers of many gods and false gods beyond their own borders. Thus the Unity of God was at first especially emphasised in those sides or aspects of it which opposed it to the belief in, and the worship of, many gods, and again the Unity was especially emphasised in those sides and aspects of it which opposed it to those particular beliefs, and those

particular kinds of worship, which the teachers and the people knew to be actually existing around them.

What were those beliefs and those particular kinds of worship? To describe them would, I fear, take far too long, but I may say about them just this. The supposed divine powers were many: there were male gods and female gods, kindly gods and cruel gods. Sometimes, too,—among some peoples and at some periods—the sun and moon and stars were regarded as divine, and were worshipped as gods or goddesses. The gods were not sharply distinguished and separated from nature: they were sometimes half identified with actual visible things. Then the worship of these gods was often impure and degraded. Their favour was sought, their anger was appeased, by rites often cruel and absurd, or fantastic and superstitious. Again, the gods and goddesses were portrayed and symbolised and represented in visible and bodily forms. Men made images and statues of the gods—as I have already said—and, often forgetting that the image was the work of their own hands, they even worshipped it and paid it homage. To worship the sun was foolish enough: to worship an image of the sun was more foolish still. This worship of images we call idolatry. The image became an idol. Sometimes the god was represented by an animal: a golden calf or bull became a god and received the worship of adoring crowds. In the early times many Israelites fell themselves into the grave error of representing their own God, of whom they had not yet a sufficiently pure and high idea, under the likeness of a bull. And others thought of him as having the shape of a man, with a man's body and a man's voice. So long as these ideas were not utterly abandoned, it was hardly possible for

them to think of him as perfect. With bodily limitations he naturally was often supposed to possess other limitations and imperfections as well.

Hence the great teachers were anxious to point out that the true God of Israel was other than the false gods of the nations around, other than the false ideas and representations of him which were unfortunately often cherished by many of his people. The other gods were unreal: the true God was intensely real. They were dead; he was intensely alive. They were connected with parts of the visible world: they were supposed to be gods of the sun and moon; gods of the hills and the plains; gods of rivers and trees. Or they were considered gods of nature in yet another way: gods of nature's forces and powers, whereas the true God was the Lord and Creator of these forces. They were gods of fertility or gods of dearth; gods of life or gods of death. But the true God was One: the Lord of death, the source of life. The great teachers of Israel were led by God to realise that he was the Lord of nature, but not a part of nature; that he was the Creator of all, but himself other than, and distinct from, all that he had made. In one important sense he was above, beyond, and outside the world of sense and sight. The Creator is other than his creatures.

Especially keen was the hostility of the great teachers to all idolatry and image-worship. God, they insisted, had no shape or body or form: no likeness must be made of him. He must not be worshipped in the symbol of anything, whether in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters below. Not as a star, or as a bull, or as a great fish, must we think of or represent the One and Only God. We must not attempt to represent him to our

senses in any form whatsoever. He is other than the things we see and touch and hear. Yet what he is we believe that we so far truly know when we say of him that he is good and wise, perfect in goodness, perfect in wisdom. The great Hebrew teachers summed up their belief in God's *difference* from the things we see and touch and hear (including ourselves), and their belief in his *perfection* (as regards goodness and wisdom), by one great word—a word which became a favourite word of theirs in reference to God. That word was Holiness. The God of Israel whom they taught Israel to believe in, was the Holy God, and his supreme attribute was Holiness. We shall have to speak of this attribute again.

We seem to see in this teaching of Israel's great teachers the express will of God in the education of man. For it was of the utmost importance that the Jews, and through them many other races, should learn that God was other than his creatures, including man. *More* than, *better* than, and also *other* than. It was of the utmost importance that the Jews, and through them many other races, should learn that God was above and beyond and even outside the world we see and hear and touch. It was, perhaps, even necessary to over-emphasise the *otherness*, to over-emphasise the *outsideness*. It was necessary to overstate these truths rather than to understate them. God, as we shall hear, is not only outside the world, but he is *also* within it. God is not only more and better and *other* than man, but he is also, in a certain sense, *like* and even *in* man.

If God were *wholly* and *absolutely* unlike man, we could not have anything to do with him, and he could not have anything to do with us. He could not influence or help us; we could not know about

him or pray to him. For any *relations* to exist between God and man, they must be able to *communicate* with each other, and in order to communicate with each other, there must be some likeness, some links, between them. In Biblical language these links and that likeness are expressed in the famous words: "In the image of God made he man."

So the great teachers learned and taught that man had a certain kinship with God, not a kinship in flesh and blood, but a kinship in immaterial *spirit*. God is alive and man is alive: that is one likeness; but far deeper and more far-reaching is this. Our reason, which expresses itself in knowledge and goodness, our reason, through which we know and are good, is, as we believe, not wholly alien from the divine reason. Our reason is the divine image in which we are created. Or shall we not rather say our *spirit*? What do I mean by spirit? The word spirit is derived from the Latin *spiritus*, which literally means "breath" or "wind." The Hebrew word for spirit, *ruach*, also means "wind" or "breath." But we do not mean anything material when we speak of man's spirit or when we speak of man's soul. We mean by man's spirit that part of him in virtue of which he is a self-conscious, rational and moral being, that in him, and of him, which enables him to apprehend and love God, which enables him to apprehend and love goodness. We mean that in him, or that of him, which, as we believe, will survive earthly death, man's inmost or truest self, which constitutes the essence of his manhood. Spirit, then, in this sense of the word, is not *only* and merely reason, but it is reason which feels and wills. And that is why many people

prefer to speak of our kinship with God as being a kinship in spirit, and why they prefer to speak of the divine image in which we are created as being our soul or spirit rather than our reason. For God is not merely, as we believe, pure reason; he is not mere thought: he does not only think, he also wills and feels. For if we say God cares for us, do not these words imply feeling? So perhaps it is true to say that the human spirit which expresses itself in feeling, willing and thinking (rational feeling, rational willing and rational thinking) is akin to the divine spirit, just as the divine spirit is its origin and home. If we are asked what God is, we answer that we do not know, but spirit seems to describe his nature better than any other single word. It is because man's nature is not *wholly* other than God's nature that the preacher can exclaim: "Try and become like God. Try and become holy even as God is holy."

Again, though the Hebrew teachers learned and taught that God is above and beyond and outside the world, they also learnt and taught that he is not *only* outside it, but also in a mysterious sense *within* it. They taught that God is the Creator of all things, and that he sustains all that he has made. He is, some would say, the soul of the universe, or as a great Jewish poet has said, "Thou supportest all things but all things cannot support thee. Thou fillest all space, but space cannot contain thee." Another and much earlier poet declares that God is everywhere: his spirit is *omnipresent*.[1] But he rightly adds that such thoughts, however true, are too hard for him. They are too hard for almost all of us. Let us, when we say that God is everywhere,

[1] Psalm cxxxix.

remember, and be content to remember, two things. First, that we are not to think of God as if he were a sort of very thin substance, invisible and pure, stretched out through all space. God is not a material thing. We cannot understand God's everywhereness, or rather we can form no picture or representation of it. We need not do so if, in the second place, we remember that it means that always and everywhere God is present, and that it is the same God who is always and everywhere present. And so it means that God is both far off and near. In other words, he is " near to all those who call upon him," wherever they live, wherever they are. He is being called upon at this very hour by beings, perchance wiser than we, living upon some planet which circles round the most distant star that the biggest telescope has yet revealed to us. To them he is as near as he is to us : the same God for us and for them.[1]

That is the meaning of God's everywhereness or omnipresence which it is necessary and good for us to lay to heart. *How* this wonderful everywhereness can be, we should have to be God to understand. In other words, only God can understand God; only God can understand himself.

[1] One of my critics writes : " Children very soon ask, ' What is God like ? ' The question must not be shirked. It is necessary from the first to do two things which you mention in this chapter : one negative and the other positive. (A) The child must be told, and made to think, again and again, that God is not like anything in the world. This must be so often repeated to the child that the negation will become a familiar truth. (B) The child must be told, and made to think, again and again, that God is a Spiritual Being. This affirmation must also be made a familiar truth. The child must be directed to those aspects of its own nature which, though they are not perceptible to the senses, are none the less known to him to be real—his thoughts, his feelings, his memories. These constitute the spiritual side of his life, and in God these spiritual aspects of life, perfect and harmoniously blended and combined, constitute the *whole* life. Hence though God is like nothing else we know or believe in, he is real, but his reality is not material ; it is spiritual."

CHAPTER V

THE GOODNESS OF GOD—THE PROBLEM OF EVIL—HUMAN FREEDOM

In this chapter I touch all too soon, and perhaps all too rashly, upon the deepest problem of religion. Much of it will be of no good whatever to children under fifteen. Still one never quite knows what questions children may ask even in early years, and it may be desirable for parents to be prepared and forearmed. One of my judges said: "You cannot talk about the fight against sin to a child of ten." But I am not so perfectly sure. At all events we tell children even at a very early age to fight their own failings, and we show them that they will be all the better boys and girls if they have, or when they have, conquered and overcome their failings. And could we not at an early stage tell them that sometimes we are able to help a friend or companion or playmate in his failings just as sometimes a friend may help us in ours? Such help profits not only the receiver but also the giver, just because it can rarely be given except with a little trouble and with some pain. Could we not show how such giving and receiving seems part of the way in which God wants us to become better ourselves and to help others to become better too? If a child were to say: "How nice it would be to have been made without faults, so that we never had any trouble," could we not show that this very trouble helps

us to become finer and better boys and girls than we could be without it? This is very much the same thought in simpler form, which I have suggested in my remarks about the fight against sin.

THE Jewish religion, some elements of which I have desired to speak about in this little book, stands and falls with its teaching about God. For all Jews the belief in God is the central feature, the cardinal doctrine, of their religion. Not every one who believes in God is through that belief a Jew, but no one who does not believe in God is a Jew, except in the sense that he may have been born of Jewish parents. Thus the word "Jew" is used (unfortunately) in these two very different senses: sometimes it means a Jew by religion, sometimes a Jew by birth. I use it to mean a Jew by religion. Not every one who says "I believe in God" is through that belief a Jew, because to make him a Jew there are other beliefs which he should believe as well. But those other beliefs are all dependent upon the first belief. They would fall to the ground without it. He who believes in God, and believes also in his perfect Unity and perfect goodness, is more than half-way to belonging to our Jewish brotherhood, even though he does not bear the Jewish name. Not the whole way: yet more than half the way. Even if he cannot come the whole way with us, if he cannot wholly see as we see, and believe as we believe, he has yet come more than half the way, and come the more important half, and he may at least be regarded as our comrade and our ally.

Of the Unity of God I need not say much more. Let us, however, once more call to mind that the one

God whom men pray to in Denmark is the same one God whom we pray to in England. One God for the English, and the same one God for the Danes.

He is the divine father of the Jews, he is the divine father of Christians and Buddhists. If he is the father of Frenchmen, he is the father of Zulus, and so on.

We saw too that the Unity of God did not mean that his nature was poor, but, on the contrary, that it was rich. Our nature is richer than the nature of a stone, a daisy, or a gnat, but our richer nature is imperfectly one. Our richer nature often means discord, struggle, conflict, ending sometimes in defeats and sometimes in victories. But God's nature, though infinitely richer than ours, is yet, as we believe, perfectly One. As one of my judges aptly says: "It is the white where all the colours are."

It is but a portion of God's nature which he has revealed to us. Surely there is much in it which we can never know or understand. Nevertheless, what we *do* believe is, as we *also* believe, true so far as it goes. In one sense it goes very far. For though, as a great Jewish poet has said: what we know is but "the outskirts of his ways," and "how small a whisper do we hear of him," yet our faith bids us believe that in holding God to be the living source of knowledge and goodness, we have reached up to essential and fundamental elements of his nature and being.

If our religion bids us believe that God is One, it no less earnestly bids us believe that God is wise and good. When we say that God is good—for of his goodness I want specially to speak—we also

mean that however much greater his goodness may be than our goodness, yet it is not wholly unlike our own. There is a real, true and deep meaning in those three simple words, in that short simple sentence: God is good! The word "goodness" is what we may rightly call an *inclusive* word. Some people would call it a little colourless, but I like it none the less well for that. Some would prefer to say: God is righteous, or God is loving, and these sentences are, as we believe, no less true than the sentence: God is good. His goodness includes righteousness and love, just as it includes justice and pity. The doctrine of God's Unity constrains us to believe that God's justice is not tempered or softened by his pity, though *we* may have to make use of such phrases from our human point of view, but that his goodness is justice *and* pity in one. But if righteousness seems to you the highest and most *inclusive* form of goodness, then by all means say that God is righteousness, and if love seems to you the highest and most *inclusive* form of goodness, then by all means say that God is love. In one sense, and from one point of view, love is a very good word to apply to God, because it implies that God *cares*. It implies that he not only *thinks* and *wills*, but that he *feels*. And if he feels, he *cares*.

Here we reach the central point, the deepest truth, but also the deepest problem, of all *Theistic* religions, that is to say of every religion which proclaims and teaches *God*. Perhaps you will wonder at my language, and with reason, for I think that I have spoken of more than one teaching as the central point, the most important doctrine of all. And, of course, there can only be one *centre*, and only one *most* important doctrine. I believe

I called the Unity of God the *most* important, and the central, doctrine, and then I called the goodness of God the *most* important, and the central, doctrine, and now I call the teaching that God cares the most important, and the central, doctrine. Each one, as I come to it, seems to me the most important, as sometimes each glorious poem of the great poets seems to me, as I read it, the most beautiful poem in all the world. Perhaps, really, the Unity, the Goodness, the Caring, all hang together. Could he be *wholly* good, if he were not *purely* one, and could he be *wholly* good, if he did not *care*?

But this *caring*, though so great, so vital, so all-important a truth, is also a very great puzzle. It is not an easy truth, and yet we cannot get on without it. When we have reached to a belief in God, we cannot stop short before the caring. What, in the last resort, confirms and maintains men and women in the assured conviction and faith that God is? It is their knowledge and conviction of right and wrong, their faith in goodness, which compel and urge them to believe in an eternal source and condition of goodness, in other words, to believe in God. He, as the source of goodness, must himself be good. But if he is good, then, we repeat again and again, he cares, he must care. Yes, in spite of all, he cares, he must care. At last the words become a sort of song, a song of comfort and consolation, a song of peace and of triumph: He cares, he must care!

What do I mean by saying: "in spite of all"? What do those words "in spite of" mean? Ah, they mean so much, they mean such sad and grievous and terrible things. They mean such sore puzzles, such insoluble problems! We will not shirk what

they mean, but I cannot discuss everything that they mean in this book. Remember that we are here right in front of the greatest difficulty of all "Theistic" religions including our own. But remember too that the best and wisest men, the most experienced men, the greatest heroes and the holiest saints, have sung, and still sing, the song: He cares, he must care! Perhaps one of the reasons for the existence of so much that puzzles us may be that it exercises our faith. If there were nothing to try our faith in God, it might become shallow, flabby, poor. But when pressed and tried by the sore problems of life, it can become deep and keen and strong. It is perhaps with faith as with virtue: it needs to be tempered like steel in the fires of temptation and difficulties. This may be one of the many reasons, true, so far as it goes.

"In spite of." What are the "in spite of's"? What are the trials and difficulties, the puzzles and problems to which I have alluded? There are what we may call intellectual difficulties, which need not, and usually do not, greatly trouble us. We cannot understand how God can think of and care for all of us at once, and not merely for "us," but for all his endless worlds and for the creatures which live upon them. How can he "hear" a million prayers at the same moment of time? How can he be everywhere at once? But, as I said before, only God can understand God; that this must be so appeals immediately to our minds. A gnat would be unable to understand the powers of man: a man is equally unable to understand the powers of God.

Far more difficult and puzzling and painful than any difficulties such as these, are the difficulties which have to do with the *goodness* of God. Is God really

good? we sometimes feel inclined to say; can he really care when even on our own little planet, earth, there is so much cruelty, and misery, and degradation? Did he who made the lamb make also the tiger? Did he who sends the rain send also the earthquake and the volcano? Does he really care, in spite of the endless streams of tears which, generation after generation, have flowed down millions of human faces? Why has he educated humanity so slowly? Why have there been savages and cannibals? Why have there been such great masses of dull, hopeless misery (as of slaves), which have not led to virtue or knowledge? To what end are the sufferings of animals? What is the purpose of the appalling cruelties which men have wrought against men in the very name of religion itself? One set of men have tortured other men, and burnt them alive, merely because they wanted to worship and think of God in a rather different way from that of their butchers and murderers? Why has God allowed men to commit such detestable wickednesses, and to declare with loathsome hypocrisy, nay even sometimes, in hardly less loathsome self-delusion, to believe, that they did them in his service and to his glory? These awful questions could easily be extended. We could all make up lists of them, and draw up a hundred queries as agonizing and harrowing as these.

To these terrible questions there is, and there can be upon earth, no satisfying answer. We do not know. We can think of a few answers (I suggested one a few lines back) which explain a very little, but we cannot explain the difficulties properly or entirely. We can suggest *palliatives*, or alleviations, which, though they by no means go the whole way,

are nevertheless true as far as they go. Our finite intelligences may suggest some reasons which may underlie God's infinite wisdom, but we can never find a certain interpretation or key to all these grievous problems. Some find comfort in one sort of reflections; some in another. One of my critics writes: "How could we have learnt except through experience? Both joy and sorrow, happiness and pain, have had to teach us. Why should we expect God to teach us except very slowly? We learn through contrasts: darkness and shadows may be as necessary as light. Insight, both moral and intellectual, is gained from the shadow as well as from the light."

We can realise that unless man were allowed to do wrong, he could never freely do right. We learn by our mistakes; still more do we learn by suffering. The noblest human characters have been formed by trouble. I have elsewhere spoken about such helps to the growth of character and about other alleviations of the problem of "evil," and I need not repeat what I have there said.[1] The fight against suffering and sin, whether in ourselves or in others, has been a noble fight; it has produced noble lives and noble characters. Self-sacrifice, the greatest of human virtues, the glory and distinction of man, could only have come about by the voluntary and willing acceptance of sorrow and suffering in order to help others, to lighten their burden, to aid them to triumph over their temptations and their sins, to lessen and share the miseries which these sins have caused. Then, too, martyrdom has often ennobled the martyr. If there is much misery which *seems* to effect no purpose, there is much more which brings out, in the sufferer and not merely in the sympathiser, the noblest

[1] See my *Bible for Home Reading*, vol. ii. pp. 200-207.

elements in character : firmness under trial, fidelity under contumely, patience under pain, and, above all, an irresistible resolve to rise above the pain, to come out of it, or in despite of it, to a higher and fuller life. It may be said: "But why could not all these effects have been produced without the martyrdom, the pain and the contumely?" Yes, that is the mystery. But, nevertheless, these good effects did come from, or in despite of, these evils, and it is therefore in a sense not untrue to assert that if there is nothing in human life perfectly good, there is also nothing perfectly evil. If God in his wisdom permitted evil, he too it was who made the good which somehow emerges from it.

Such thoughts help us a little, but they are far from explaining even a tithe of the problem. But there is another and greater alleviation which is our hope that our souls—the "better part" of ourselves —are not destroyed by death, but that, in some form and manner which we cannot now understand, but which we shall experience by dying, we shall live again, and attain to a fuller knowledge of God. Of this hope I shall speak more fully later on.

But I want now to point out that there are two kinds of evil, one kind which is independent of man, and one kind which is dependent upon him, which he, as it were, directly or indirectly, brings into being. We speak, for example, of an earthquake which causes the death of, let us say, a thousand persons at one and the same time, which perchance robs the husband of his wife, the child of his father, as an "evil"—a physical evil. And yet death, *in itself*, is not an evil. It is not an evil for animals; it is still less, as we believe, an evil for man. Still it may be allowed that sorrow and pain and suffering are

"evils," and that these may all be caused by the earthquake, which is independent of man. But far more numerous are the evils of which man directly or indirectly is himself the cause—sometimes to himself, sometimes to others living with him, sometimes to others yet unborn. This evil we call moral evil, because it is the product of man's ignorance, or man's folly, or man's sin. It seems to be part of the divine education of the race—the awful means by which civilisation, human wisdom and human righteousness are produced. Saying that does not *explain* evil: it does not make the divine responsibility less: the burden of faith is not really lessened. The suffering of one man is not more easy to explain, as it was not to *him* less sore, because the ultimate result of it was that his distant descendant became better or wiser and happier. But saying that does make *our own responsibility greater*, and gives us a grander purpose in our own lives. The evils which the folly, ignorance and wickedness of former generations have left to us as an inheritance we must seek to lessen. We must not increase this inheritance in our turn by our own folly, ignorance and wickedness. The burden of evil must be slowly and painfully lessened and destroyed. To endure the burden, man needs faith in the divine goodness and love. To fight the evil which man himself has wrought, man needs all the courage and knowledge and love to which, with God's help and with his own effort, he can attain.

Far more difficult to explain and far more impossible to conceive (as it seems to me) are goodness and knowledge without God than evil and suffering with him. I can have faith that the good and wise God has his own adequate solution of evil and

suffering, but that a godless world produced goodness and knowledge, reason and love—*this* I cannot believe at all.

What, however, I most want to urge and repeat here is that those who have seen most of life, including its cruelties, its miseries, and its sins, have usually been, and usually still are, the firmest and strongest believers in the goodness of God; the firmest and strongest believers that he knows the answer to all our problems. Those who have probed the worst of life still believe in God and in the divine goodness; they still sing the great song of triumph and of faith: He cares, he must care!

Some thoughts came into my mind at this point, and induced me to write a few paragraphs about which one of my judges said that "in a book of this kind they are unnecessary and incomprehensible." But in its present form my book is not for children, but for parents and for teachers. I, therefore, have not erased the erring paragraphs, because parents and teachers may perhaps find in them some hint or suggestion which may be of use to them on an unexpected occasion.

There are those who have tried or try to reconcile the goodness of God with the evils of the world by supposing that God's power is limited: he would wish to do better for his world, but he cannot. He, the eternal spirit, has to contend with stubborn, refractory material. The evils of the world are in the deepest sense inevitable. Or again the fight against evil is a divine fight: God is always getting the better of evil more and more. He has never got, or can never get, the better of it completely. But this attempt at reconcilement and explanation will probably be found to raise greater difficulties than it

relieves: at any rate, it is not, and I do not think it can or will ever be, the answer of the Jewish religion. There is no race which has had to endure, or which still has to endure, greater and more undeserved troubles than ours: there is no race which has been more vilely treated by its fellow-men; there is no race which has drunk more deeply the brimming cup of sorrows; there is no race which can chronicle more martyrs and victims for its faith. Nevertheless, there is no race which has clung more devoutly and stubbornly to the doctrine of the goodness of God, and with the doctrine of the goodness it has always joined the doctrine of divine omnipotence. Judaism has never attempted to find in any limitation of God's power the key to the riddle of evil. It has always preferred to say: "I do not understand, but I still believe. He cares, he must care." And if it be true that good often comes from evil, of no race is it truer than of the Jews. I do not hold with those who believe that Judaism only thrives, or can thrive, under persecution. But from the records of Jewish history it must be acknowledged that some of the best and finest of Jewish virtues have been due to, or developed by, persecution. "Whom God loves he chastens," may be a universal truth, but it seems specially true in the case of the Jews.

In one sense, indeed, or perhaps in two senses, the power of God *is* limited. But we believe that it is a sort of voluntary limitation, or a limitation involved in the very nature of his being. For instance, God is truth and the source of truth. Truth can never be false. The source of truth can never deceive. Two and two make four, and not God himself can make them five. Nor can God undo the past. What was real cannot be made illusory.

If that is one sense in which God's power is limited, there is also another. For if God has given to man a measure of freedom, that freedom too cannot be illusory; it must be a real freedom. We do not act like the winds or the rain; we do not act like the gnats and the frogs; we approach a little nearer to the freedom of God. I will not raise the old puzzle as to how God can really know the future of mankind if man's actions are free. We can allow such puzzles to rest. It may well be that to God the freedom of man does not hinder foreknowledge or limit omniscience. But it is more important for us to recognise, with a certain humility and awe, the measure of our freedom, and with that recognition there should come a feeling of deep responsibility.

God cares, and because he cares and must care, he must desire the victory of good, the conquest of evil. Because he is good and because he cares, and because he is omnipotent, that victory must at last be assured. But we can make that victory come sooner, or we can delay its coming,—whether on earth or in that other life in which our religion bids and urges us to believe. "What!" you say: "we in our insignificance can help forward or retard the immortal purposes of God!" Even so: nothing less than this does our freedom imply. It is a great thought, but surely an inspiring one. Man is the partner of God.[1] An insignificant partner truly, but yet not a sleeping partner: and to be a partner at all is a tremendous privilege. Our Lord, our Master, our

[1] One of my judges writes: "I do not like the metaphor of 'Partner' for children." Personally, I see no harm in it. It seems to me more picturesque than "co-worker," which is the term which my critic prefers. Let my "parent and teacher" readers use whichever term they please, or find themselves a third. 'Partner' was used by an old Rabbi.

Father, the source of our life and being; all these, and our Partner too.[1]

Goodness and knowledge are real: so real, so true, that they demand the goodness and the knowledge of God. Just because evil shows up the more, and gives the grander scope for, human goodness, just because the fairest human plants sometimes grow amid dunghills of misery or of vice, does the greatness of evil not prevent us acclaiming and worshipping the goodness of God. If we can love much, he can love more. He cares, he must care!

[I should not, I think, now write so definitely about the "omnipotence" of God. God and perfect goodness go so much together that unless I believed that God was perfectly good, I should not believe in his existence. But God and omnipotence do not (for me at any rate) go together in the same way. The problem of omnipotence seems to me as inscrutable and as insoluble as the problem of evil. Insuperable difficulties seem to confront us on every side. 1923.]

[1] In all humility we may feel that it is in our power to use the gifts God has given us to make ourselves and the world more what he wishes them to be. God, our Lord and our Father, expects and *needs* the help of each one of us. We have to seek to learn his will, and with every power of our nature to try to do our utmost to further it.

CHAPTER VI

GOD AND THE WORLD: OF MIRACLES

In this chapter I have ventured to speak, perhaps too soon, upon the thorny subject of miracles. And yet I am not sure whether it may not be advisable to talk about them fairly early, say to an intelligent girl or boy of thirteen or fourteen. What one is so anxious for is that any doubt as to the miracles of the Bible should not come as a shock to the child, should not come with lack of reverence, should not come from any unbelieving source or mind, but that it should come quietly, reverently, in the regular routine of teaching, and above all that it should be conveyed to the child by one whom he knows to be an intense believer in God and in his living relations with the world and with man. The doubts must not cause mental or religious distress.

The real trouble as regards the miracles I have, I admit, not touched on in this chapter, for I was not actually writing about the Bible. The real trouble is that a narrative of which miracle forms a part is discredited as regards its accuracy if the miracle is denied. If the tales about Moses and Elisha did not happen as they are told, did they happen at all? If God did not speak to Moses "face to face," if he did not with an audible voice speak the Ten Commandments to the people, did he in any sense speak to Moses and the people at all? Are

the supposed stories mere "inventions" and fairy tales? The same difficulty meets us in telling children that the laws of Moses are later than Moses. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying." Did he neither "speak" nor speak "to Moses"? What, then, is the authority, and where is the "revelation"?

As regards the second of these difficulties, the divine "speaking" and the non-Mosaic authorship of the various laws, I shall have something to say later on. As regards the miraculous stories I think we shall have to face the difficulty fairly and squarely, simply and honestly. I think we must tell the children pretty soon that the earliest history of the Israelites was written down long after it took place, and that, as in the early history of other peoples, legends and marvels collected round it. But what we may and do believe about the early history of Israel is that it started the process which led to the establishment of the Jewish religion. It is part, therefore, of a process which we may rightly call providential, and in which the purpose of God may be discerned. God led our ancestors, or helped our ancestors, to find the way out of darkness into light, out of ignorance into knowledge, out of crude ideas of right and wrong to noble conceptions of duty and of God. Therefore the early story of our race is a story of revelation, whatever the exact accuracy or inaccuracy of the various incidents reported. We take the story as a whole, we look at it as the total setting for the highest teaching, and we look at it in its total results. And so looking at it, we say that this is a story of revelation, the final issues of which are not yet concluded, the subjects of which—or rather the descendants of the subjects of which!—are still alive, still respondent (as we hope) to a religious duty, still the depositaries of a religious mission, which is still going on, and the later acts and developments of which, though

visions of them come before us in hope and in faith, are yet hidden from our eyes.

We can also, as regards details, explain that legends often cluster round historical characters. Some great scholars hold that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are hardly to be regarded as historical characters; yet even if this view were proved to be correct, we can, at any rate, show that in the stories about them, important traditions and valuable religious conceptions are embodied. Moses may properly be considered, in spite of the miraculous narratives, as a character of history. He remains the human founder of the religious community of Israel, the earliest lawgiver and prophet. In his mouth were placed later laws which were supposed to be founded upon his teaching and spoken in his spirit. To him in their earliest and shortest form the Ten Words may possibly go back. While their greatness and their authority lie in themselves and not in their date, yet it is pleasant to think that they probably go back to a very early period of Israelite history and development. We do not believe that God spoke them audibly before the people at Sinai, but we do believe that the divine will is none the less surely conveyed in them.

Reflections such as these may reverently be put before children at a comparatively early age. We shall thus avoid the painful and inaccurate alternatives: either divine or human: either verbally true or wholly valueless: either the miracles as they stand or no authority at all: either inspired "in the old way" or inventions and deceit. It is because a better and truer and newer way was not taught to some, that they have fallen away from Jewish doctrine and practice altogether. New lines are now necessary in the interests of truth and of religion: a first attempt on such newer lines is indicated in the present book. May it soon suggest a

much fuller and better book on the same new lines, for which it can at once be abandoned.

The bed-rock of the Jewish teaching about God is that he is One, Wise, and Good. Over and above these positive affirmations that God is One, Wise, and Good, Jewish teaching deals largely in negatives. We say, for instance, God is *not* a body, God has *no* shape or form, God was *never* born and will *never* die, God is *not* confined by space, or limited to any particular locality. We can, of course, turn these negatives into positives by saying, as we indeed do emphatically say, that God is spirit, that he is eternal, and that he is omnipresent. I have spoken about each of these three affirmations before, and I will here only add that our belief that God is non-material—not made or formed of matter—however hard for us to realise (for on earth we have no experience of anything which is alive and is not material), is yet very important. For that which is material must have come into existence (there must have been a time when it was not, at least in its present form), and it must die and pass out of existence (there must come a time when it will no longer be, at least in its present form). Only spirit is eternal. So, however, with our human instincts, we may long to *picture* God, and however impossible it is for us to *picture* spirit, we are yet taught by our religion not to seek to picture him, but to cling to the belief that he is *not* matter, and that he *is* spirit—that he thinks, wills, feels (and cares !) without bodily or physical organs of any kind whatever. It is, moreover, wrong even to attempt to picture the Divine Spirit symbolically, for as soon as we use a picture to represent an idea, we are very liable to materialise and coarsen the idea.

Then as to the omnipresence of God, we need not worry our minds by trying to understand it. Enough for us to remember that by the divine omnipresence we mean that God is "at once far-off and near." Throughout the universe there is one God, just as throughout time there is one God. The Unity carries with it the Eternity and the Omnipresence.

But we now come to another most important section or part of the Jewish teaching about God. We have to ask: What is the *relation* of this One God to the world which he sustains?

Jewish teaching upon this very important subject has not been always the same; it has grown and developed, and has become, as I believe, truer and purer. Nor do all Jews think alike in these matters even to-day. The teaching which I put forward here is my own faith and that of many other Jews who think and believe as I do, but it is not the faith of all. Yet in many important points we do all think alike, and have all thought as we now think for a long while.

I have spoken of the world or the universe which God *sustains*. By this word we mean that God is the inner life of the universe, that he controls it, and determines its destinies, and directs it to his own ends. But in addition to *sustaining* the universe did God also create it? The question seemed of immense importance to our ancestors (and if space were no object I could tell you why), but it is of less importance now. What they meant by "creation" was this. They meant that if you went far enough back into time, year after year, year after year, a year would at last arrive when *besides* God there was *nothing*. As God is pure spirit, this meant that there was a time when there was no matter at all. And if there was

a " time " when there was nothing besides God, there was *endless* time, an *infinite* time when there was nothing besides him. Now I do not for a moment pretend to say that God, who is spirit, could not *create* matter,—create it, as it used to be said, out of *nothing*. I neither affirm this nor deny it. But what does seem to me unthinkable is that there was an infinite time, when, so to speak, God was thinking of, and caring for, nothing beyond himself. That is why I, for my part, prefer to believe that though God *was* before the earth we know and the stars we see existed, yet that there was always a universe which he sustained.[1] There was a beginning to our earth and all the stars, and we are bound, I suppose, to believe that to material things which had a " beginning " there must also at last come a transformation or an " end." But, however this may be, I cannot believe that for infinite time God *was* alone, just as I cannot believe that for infinite time he *will* ever be alone. There were always worlds, there will always be worlds, for him to sustain, to guide, to control, and to care for. The words of the familiar hymn implying that for infinite time God was alone without a world, and that at last for infinite time he will again be alone without a world, only appeal to me in the sense that God is, as it were, independent of the existence of any *particular* universe, but not in the sense that his existence has any meaning apart from the existence of any universe *whatever*.

I have spoken of God as *sustaining* the world. This word *sustains* appeals to me. It seems to me

[1] Perhaps, however, a spiritual world preceded the material one. There is a passage in the Midrash which says that the souls of the righteous existed before the " world." Some may be inclined to agree with a critic who says that he does not like this paragraph ; " it deals with the unknowable and is too dogmatic."

to describe well the caring, tireless activity of God. Other words will seem better to other minds. This word is very helpful to me.

The learned men who have investigated nature, with all its immense variety of forms, have found that throughout nature, throughout the endless number of material things, there is *law*. Without law there would be confusion: in fact nature without law would be inconceivable. Sunset, sunrise, the tides, the sap in the trees, the boiling of water, the return of a comet, the floating of wood in water, the sinking of stones,—all these things happen according to law. The more we know of the things we see and touch, the more we find that they act upon each other according to regular rules and sequences. These rules and sequences and regularities are, as we believe, among the laws or arrangements by which God sustains the world. The laws are his laws; they are the expressions of his purpose and his will, while in his relation to nature we might even call them manifestations of himself.[1]

It was a long while before men thought of nature in this way. They did not know nature and its laws as we know them to-day. When they had advanced to the thought and the belief of One God, they thought of him rather as *outside* the world than as its inward spirit, its sustainer. They did indeed believe he created the rain and the dew, but they did not regard the laws by which the rain and the dew appear as divine in the same sense as we do. If a man, for instance, makes a toy or a clock, he has done with it. The toy and the clock have nothing

[1] A critic says that we may see an adumbration of this thought in Genesis viii. 22: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." And another suggests Psalm cxlviii. 6 and Job xxxviii. 33.

more to do with him, though he is their creator. He can indeed come along and break the toy, and he can shake the clock and make it stop. But not so do we now think of God and nature. He is not in the same sense outside nature as man is outside the clock and the toy. In some mysterious sense, which we can never fully understand, but which yet by the pressure of reason we are fain to believe, he sustains nature from within. He does not poke at it from without. Hence nature's laws are his laws, and I cannot conceive God as giving outside pokes to nature so that, on occasion, this law or that law is momentarily changed.

Such outside pokes and occasional changes were not difficult for our ancestors to believe in, and many Jews believe in them still. In fact those occasional changes or stops or variations in nature, directly and suddenly induced and ordered by God, seemed to them more divine than the regular laws according to which all things work or live or move. The supposed exceptional seemed to them more divine than the usual and the regular. It does not seem so to me and to many others. The occasional pokes and changes seem to us to make God rather an outside magician than the perpetual sustainer.

But our ancestors found no difficulty in believing that at certain moments of crisis, and for certain special objects and ends, God altered and violated his laws : that, for instance, he once made iron float, or that he once suddenly made an ass speak like a man, or that he once caused thick darkness for three days in one part of a country, but allowed light to shine in another part where, near by, the Israelites were living. These violations of law and order in material things are called miracles. There are many

examples of them in the Bible. Very many—probably most—Jews still believe that these miracles really took place, and they regard them as instances or even as proofs of God's omnipotence. Those who think with me do not believe that these miracles ever took place. Any such breaking in upon his own laws by God does not make him more divine, and more wise, and more good in our eyes. We cannot believe that he ever can violate the law by which iron sinks any more than he can violate the law by which two and two make four, or the law according to which if you let go a heavy ball it will fall quickly to the ground. For these laws are eternally guaranteed by him: they are, in a sense, a part of his own being: they are as true to him as to us.

So I do not believe in these physical miracles. How the stories which tell of them arose is quite another matter. The early history of all religions is full of them: the miracles of one religion are usually disbelieved by the adherents of every other religion. The stories which contain the miracles were not deliberately invented: they grew up from many causes or sources, but they were rarely or never deliberate inventions—at least, the miracles of the Bible are not such inventions, and the moral and spiritual teaching which is sometimes interwoven with these miracles is no less beautiful and true than it would be without them. The story of the Exodus from Egypt and the lesson of the Passover are, for instance, independent of the miracle of the passage of the Red Sea. The beauty of the story of Naaman's healing is independent of its actual occurrence as a miracle. But, as a matter of fact, the greatest teaching of the Bible is not closely mixed up with its

miracles, or can be easily detached from them. What is true is that there is a sort of miraculous atmosphere in some of the Biblical narratives, because the relations of God with man, which we believe in no less than our ancestors, and which we regard as no less intimate than they, were hardly realisable by them except in terms of miracles and marvels. If God spoke to man, he came down on a mountain in thunder and fire, or he manifested himself in a burning bush. He seems to us to speak to our modern prophets and heroes in ways less miraculous than these, but yet hardly in ways less wonderful. Perhaps then we may believe that at that time, and for many centuries after, the truths of the teaching needed the protective covering of the miracles. The first would not have been so readily accepted and understood without the second. And there is so great a fascination about the marvellous, that we can readily understand how much the belief in miracles helped men in the infancy of the world to conceive of a being greater than themselves, a being with more power than any which they could wield. Therefore the miracles are among the illusions or temporary beliefs through which God in his wisdom educates the human race. When we need them no longer, our belief in them can fall away; and I think and hope that you will be able to believe all your lives in the Unity, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, even without believing that, on certain occasions in the past, God, as it were, stepped in and altered his own laws.

But if I and those who think with me differ from many other Jews in not believing that physical miracles actually took place, this is not, as you will have seen, because we believe that God has *less* to do

with the world, but because we believe that he has *more*. The world is so much *his* world, its laws are so much *his* laws, that there is no room or possibility for occasional suspension or change. The world is not less divine, the heavens do not proclaim God's glory less, because these miracles did not happen, but to my mind and way of thinking, the heavens proclaim his glory more.[1] The unbroken and unbreakable laws seem more intimately his. And the laws do not destroy the sense of wonder and of mystery. Life is not less mysterious because we know more of its laws: it becomes more wonderful and more mysterious still. The recurrence of spring is no less a marvel now than it was in the days of old. Shall we not also say that the discoveries of science, all depending upon the knowledge of nature's laws and regularities, have increased our homage and adoration of nature's God? Discoveries such as the Röntgen rays and wireless telegraphy in our own day do not surely empty the world of the sense of wonder, but augment it. It is a cheap way of looking at life to see God's hand only in miracles; it is better and wiser to see him in all the ordered sequences of life and in all the processes of nature.

There is doubtless one difficulty which presents itself alike both to those who believe, and to those who do not believe, in miracles. If the world is God's world, the hurricane is his as well as the dew, the volcano and the earthquake as well as the sunshine and the rain. The laws of nature's cruelties are his as well as the laws of her beauties and beneficences. Here once more we come upon the problem of evil, a problem which in some ways is

[1] In the 19th Psalm, where we read that "the heavens declare the glory of God," this glory is not miracles, but the regular course of nature.

more difficult, and in some ways less difficult, when it is expressed in earthquakes and volcanoes and tidal waves than when it is expressed in savages, cannibals and idiots, or in wickedness, iniquity and sin. For no merely physical evil is so sore a puzzle as moral and mental evil, the degradation of vice and of ignorance. But, on the other hand, the evil which is in man, or which man produces, seems partly a condition of human freedom. To be good *man* must be able to be bad. Therefore in *that* respect physical evil seems less necessary in the education of man than moral evil. For was the earthquake necessary for human freedom and human goodness? Was the tidal wave necessary for human knowledge? Here we have no answer to give. Nevertheless, our faith is equal even to this demand upon its strength. Righteousness and love in man demand as their source a righteousness and love superhuman. From goodness we mount to God, and having reached up to him, we will not falter, and our faith in him shall not fail.[1]

[1] One critic has faith enough to answer the question: "Was the tidal wave necessary for human knowledge?" with the curt rejoinder, "Why not?" He adds, "Both physical and moral 'evil' were necessary for human knowledge; at any rate, human knowledge has been produced through them. Where can you draw the exact line between tolerable 'hardship,' which is clearly educational, and intolerable 'evil'? Moral and mental diseases are being studied to-day as they never were studied before. Perhaps we may at last discover the roots of many evils, both physical and moral, and so prevent their evil issues arising. Through fuller knowledge and love, evils may be more fully wiped away." This is all very well up to a point, but it is, to my mind, (*a*) only a palliative, not an explanation; (*b*) not much of a palliative if it be not supplemented by the hope of immortality. Another critic observes: "The catastrophes of nature have often roused men out of their mental torpor, and in this way have led to the reordering of life. A Rabbi said that if misfortune befell man, he should scrutinise his conduct. We do not believe that misfortune is always the consequence of sin, but, nevertheless, man does not lose, he gains, by making misfortune an opportunity for reconsidering his moral position. And so with natural catastrophes. But this 'answer' to the problem is, I admit, very inadequate."

CHAPTER VII

THE RELATION OF GOD TO MAN—GOD AS KING AND AS FATHER—OF PRAYER

This chapter needs, I think, no preface or preliminary discussion. It speaks for itself, and teachers and parents will, I believe, have no difficulty in adapting its wording even for comparatively young children. The discussion about prayer as petition and as communion should, however, be left for a more advanced period.

I HAVE spoken a little about what we believe to be God's *relation* with nature—with all the things we see and hear and feel. But now I have to speak of what is for us far more important and essential, namely, about his *relations* with ourselves.

These *relations* are, as we believe, as *all* Jews believe, far closer and more intimate than his relations with "nature." This greater closeness and intimacy depend upon the fact that God is more akin to us than to "nature," though not by any means more akin to us than he may be to millions upon millions of beings in other parts of the universe of whom we know and can know nothing. But upon earth, at all events, only we men have that kinship with God which enables us to believe in and worship God, or which enables us to attain to knowledge and to goodness. The doctrine of the kinship

of man with God is as important from one point of view as the doctrine that God is other than and different from man is from another. God is not as man; man is, or can be, like unto God: these twin teachings are both of supreme importance.

God is other than man. He is pure spirit. He is the source. He is perfect. Man is none of these. Immense, then, is the difference between them. Man is not God, or a part of God. All that he is, is given to him by God, upon whom he was, and is, and ever will be, dependent. There is no true reverence of God possible, and for my part I would, I think, add, there is no right love possible, which is not based upon the conviction that man is other than, and different from, God. The best and wisest man is separated by a huge gulf from the perfection of the Divine.[1] So it ever was, so it is, so it ever will be. To this rule there was not, there is not, and there can never be, an exception. Here is a cardinal and fundamental doctrine of our faith upon which all Jews are firmly agreed and absolutely at one. It is one of the great differences which separate our religion from Christianity.

But God is not *only* unlike man. There *is* a kinship between them, a *delegated* kinship, with which God has endowed us. By delegated I mean that this kinship comes from, and is given us, by God. The spirit through which we acquire knowledge and goodness, through which we love know-

[1] There may be Jewish mystics who (like one of my critics) may think I have spoken somewhat too emphatically. I do not think so myself. But I admit that man is not outside God, and that God is not outside man, in the physical sense that one man is outside another. God is not outside goodness and truth wherever these are found. "The river," says the judge, using a dangerous metaphor, "is not the tributary, but their *waters* mingle and are indistinguishable." Nevertheless, the distinctiveness of man and God seems to me the essence of all true communion and of all Theistic religion.

ledge and goodness, and will to do good and loving deeds, is of divine origin: it is, as some would say, God in us, the divine spirit in us,—that divine spirit of holiness which the Psalmist prayed to God that he should not take away from him. Our knowledge has been achieved—it has been possible for us to achieve it—and it is a true knowledge, so far as it has gone or can go, because our reason is akin to the reason of God. Our goodness has been achieved—it has been possible for us to achieve it—and it is a real and true goodness, so far as it goes or can go, because it is not wholly unlike, or alien to, the goodness of God.

We have called God the sustainer of nature. Thus he is also the sustainer of man as a part of nature, and in a still closer sense he is the sustainer of man, in so far as man, unlike the things we see and hear and touch, is akin to God. God is the Lord of nature, but in a special sense is he the Lord of man. For nature does not recognise and acknowledge its sustainer and Lord; whereas man does so recognise and acknowledge him. Nature is *necessarily* obedient to the laws of its being, which are the laws of God, but man can also give a *free* obedience to his Lord. It is the glory of nature to serve God unconsciously: it is the far higher glory of man to serve him consciously. Nature fulfils God's purposes unconsciously, but we can fulfil his purposes consciously, and, in some small measure, we think that we can apprehend and understand them. Man, as I have said before, in proud humility, can through service, and worship, and love, regard himself as, in some sort, the partner of God. For man is akin to the Divine.

God, then, is our Ruler and Lord. In other and

equally familiar words he is our King. What does kingship imply? It implies, on the king's side, that he cares for, and looks after, and desires the well-being of his subjects. It implies, on the subject's side, a desire to proclaim and honour the king and to obey his laws. What are these laws? That we shall speak of presently.

Man has, however, been able to think of the relations of God to man more intimately still. The metaphor of ruler and subjects does not seem adequate to us. For, in the first place, we think of the ruler or king as looking after and caring for his subjects *collectively* rather than *individually*. In the second place, we think of a king as ruling despotically, or as ruling constitutionally,—reigning, but hardly ruling. But in the case of man and God, we are not content to stop short before the faith (however hard it may be) that God cares for, and has relations with, individual men, and that he does not only care for, and have relations with, mankind as a whole. So, on the one hand, we believe that God rules us not despotically, but as subordinate partners, and that he asks of us voluntary service, uncompelled and freely rendered, while, on the other hand, we believe that there is no other ruling power or agency (as is the case with a constitutional king) between God and ourselves. Hence, though the metaphor of God as our king contains a great truth, it does not (as we believe) contain the whole truth and the deepest truth. So that to the metaphor of God as our king, we add the profounder, more intimate metaphor of God as our Father. Moreover, in addition to what I have already said, the conception of God as our Father includes several other ideas of importance and, as we believe, of

truth. We honour our king, we may even reverence him; but we love our Father. Man not only reverences God; he can also love him. Again, the metaphor of father and child suggests kinship, and implies that of our goodness and reason God is the origin and the source. Lastly, the king demands obedience, *but he does not necessarily help to cause it.* The father aids his child and teaches him. So we believe that God helps and teaches us. The subject does not usually talk with his king: he does not bring before him his daily troubles, hopes and fears. The best of kings can only know a very small number of his subjects. But the child talks with his father. Even so we believe that we can "talk" with God, and that we can bring before him our troubles, hopes and fears. And the divine Father (as we believe) gives mysterious help and strength to his human child. He *knows*, as we must seek to believe, every single one of his children.

God helps man: we may also, with the utmost reverence and caution, reverse the sentence, and say, man can help God. But the help which man can render to God is wholly different from the help which God constantly renders unto man.

Let me, then, now say a few words about that divine help. I believe that we are here approaching one of the great mysteries of religion and of life. One of the great mysteries, but also the backbone, the hinge, the root idea—or whatever other metaphor may be more significant—of living religion. For suppose there were no relation at all between man and God: suppose that God had given man a certain special endowment, and then left this endowment, as it were, to work itself out without God having anything more to do with man. Men might still meet

together to praise God, but any living relation between them would be impossible. *This living relation is what we mainly mean by religion.* We mean by it that there can be an effective intercourse between God and man, and that there are modes and ways in which God can and does influence the life of man.

But the *precise laws* of that influence are not for man to discover and apprehend. They are too subtle, too mysterious, too removed from our sight and ken. Yet religion and Judaism ask us to believe in them none the less.

We believe that God has his purpose for, and guides, the human race as a whole, and that he has relations with individuals. The purpose of God with the human race as a whole, and with special races and communities, will be considered by us later on: let us here return to his relations with individuals.

These relations depend upon the "kinship." They may be unknown to man, they may be unrealised by him. Yet they can exist notwithstanding. We dare not say that even the lowest savage, who worships perchance a stock or a stone, is unhelped and uninfluenced by God. We dare not say that even that lowest savage is not "created in the image of God," and is not akin to him. I think that we ought, perhaps, to say that there is a constant possible communication between the spirit of God and the spirit of man. In millions of cases this communication can only be slight and feeble. The purer and better man is, the fuller this communication can be, and, conversely, the communication helps man to be better and purer. At a higher stage of his development man realises this communication, and directly ascribes to God, and thanks him for, the

help which he has received, the light which has been shown him. But it may be the divine will—and I think that it has been—that in certain souls the divine light should enter with special intensity and fulness, so that such men stand out beyond their fellows, and are justly regarded as specially "inspired." Of these I will speak later.

But to ordinary men, too, we may believe that God's help also comes, so that through his light we see light, and through his strength we become strong. This does not mean that we have no wills of our own, and that we must not try all we can to see clearly and to do purely. But it means that God helps our wills and our minds to see and to do. It means that when a good man says: "A strength was given me which was not wholly my own," or, "A light was shown me which was not wholly mine," or words to a similar effect, these sayings are not false, and that the speakers are not deceived. It means that there is a deep and important truth underlying these sayings, though we cannot wholly explain it. It *is* the man who has done the difficult deed; it *is* the man who has seen the truth and the right; and yet there is accuracy in his humility—it is not *mere* humility—when he says: "It was not I, but God. God helped me to see or to do. To him be the glory: to him I render my thanks." The good deed is, in one sense, far more the work or expression of an undivided self—whose parts are not at war with each other—than the bad deed. But yet the good deed is also the work of God. He has helped, and through his help the deed was done.

Philosophers may put the truth in one way; simple folk, like you and me, may have to put it in another. But the very life of religion seems to

depend upon the truth of the simple sentence: "God helps man to do the right and to become good." Take this teaching away, and religion will surely die.

God does and can help man in many ways and at many times. Some sudden light, for example, some "leading," some inspiration, may come quite unexpectedly, and may rightly be attributed to God. But there is one special way in which man is helped, one especial season when he is helped, by his divine Father. That way and that season are the way and the season of prayer. It is through prayer, and at the time of prayer, that man becomes specially receptive for the divine help, and most able to recognise it when it comes. There is nothing, as a great man has said, more mysterious than prayer. Like other parts of religion and of the religious life it has developed, and become purer, from very lowly beginnings. Prayer meant, at first, asking the divine power for outward and material benefits, and sometimes for benefits which were of an impure kind, such as success in deceit or a victory over a personal foe. But gradually the range and purity of prayer increased. Nor must its value and its truth be estimated from its beginnings. It is a common mistake to confuse the nature of a thing with its origin, and to depreciate its value because of its beginnings. Nowhere would it be more unfortunate to make this confusion than in the case of prayer.

The development of prayer has come gradually. One great, one immensely important, step was when men prayed less for some outward or material benefit, or for the removal of some outward and material disadvantage, than for some inward grace or virtue. They began to pray, "Give me strength, O God, to resist this temptation," or, "Help me, O God, to

become purer, wiser, better." Or, again, when they thought of others and prayed, "Help us all to become more worthy of thee," or, "Help us to do thy will," or, "Forgive us our sins." These prayers are the highest stage of that kind of prayer which prays *for* something, which is a petition, a supplication. They move entirely in the realm of spirit, and we know no reason why such prayers may not only help those who put them forth by the very fact of their being prayed, but may not also receive an answer from God himself,—why, according to the laws of his relations with us, he may not give us his help in agreement with, and in answer to, our prayer.

There is another kind of prayer which is true prayer, and which yet asks for nothing, not even for spiritual benefits. That is the prayer which we may fitly call Communion,—putting ourselves into an attitude of reverence and devotion, thinking intently of God, his goodness, his purity, his love. There may be a passionate longing to free ourselves wholly from all lower leanings and desires, to depend more completely upon him, to help his cause more fully, to become more like him in our deeds. No definite petition may pass the lips, and yet there may be a true and earnest prayer. We long with all our minds and souls to understand God better, to love him more, and this very longing is a prayer. We wish we could attain to more spiritual insight and possess greater strength in order to serve him more adequately. Even our wish—if it be sincere—is a prayer. We grieve over our faults; we long to get the better of them; our remorse may be a prayer —a prayer which will end in the humble petition that God may aid us in the struggle with sin. We adore God as the perfection of knowledge and

righteousness; our adoration is a prayer. In communion, in the colloquy of the soul with God, the soul does not ask for anything, except, perchance, for the power to commune more fervently, to realise the divine more fully.

It is doubtful whether we ought to pray for outward things at all. Outward and material gifts are accidental and temporary; spiritual and inward gifts are essential and eternal. It is foolish as well as impossible to ignore the accidental, but we must never confound it with the essential. Again, suppose we pray that it may be fine next Wednesday in order that we may do some particular thing which we can only do when it does not rain. To begin with: is not the prayer selfish? May it not be better for the majority of persons that it *should* rain on Wednesday? And if we believe that the laws of nature are God's laws, and that he does not alter them by miracles even for the greatest ends, can we suppose that he will alter them for *us* and for our personal convenience? The same kind of argument will dispose, I am inclined to think, of all prayers for outside, material things. Yet when we pray, or seem to pray, for certain material things, the prayer may be more than half spiritual. If I pray for "success" in life, it may be that my prayer is really for those higher qualities of mind and soul which lead to true "success," and these qualities may be strengthened by the very act of praying for their strengthening. If I pray for my necessary food, I do not expect God suddenly to raise up a wheat crop in my garden. I pray for power to sow and reap and garner. But however we may regard such prayers, there is little doubt that the matter is totally different when we come to prayers for purely

spiritual benefits, whether for ourselves or for others or for our country at large. The laws of God which deal with spiritual things seem to us to have a closer personal relation to us—as partakers of the Divine Spirit—than do the laws of God which deal with material things. We are more akin to God, as it were, in his Spirit than in his Power. Our prayers may help ourselves and one another in ways which we know not and can never know.

There is a particular kind of prayer which seems to stand by itself. It is for an "outward thing," and yet it is not wholly a material thing. I mean the prayer which men put up when those who are near and dear to them are suffering and ill, that it may please God to send to them recovery and health and peace. We must not seek to interfere with the natural impulses of the human heart. Moreover, man is not merely material, and health is not merely a question of the body. I would not therefore like to say that it is not fitting to put forward such prayers. Yet perhaps the highest attitude of mind may be that which says: "I will use all the powers and aids which thou, O God, hast enabled man to discover so as to cure sickness. Help me to endure in my own case, and in the case of those I love, whatever may befall us. In the last resort it is thy will. The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God: no evil can come unto them."

Some may say that if I pray to God for courage or resignation or strength or insight, the prayer may be its own answer in the sense that the very earnestness of my prayer may bring to me the benefit which I ask from God. *I* have helped *myself*. I do not think that such an explanation is adequate. Believing, as I do, that there is "kinship" between us and

God, I do not pretend to fathom or understand the laws of the influence which extends between the divine Father and the human child. I have a feeling as if spiritual influences were constantly pouring out from the infinite source, which is never the poorer for all which it gives forth. As the rays of the sun get through different substances in different degrees, and through some substances not at all, I have a feeling as if the spiritual rays and influences of the divine source made their way in different degrees, or not at all, to different souls. The windows of some men are perhaps nearly shut. The windows of others have only a few chinks and crevices open. At some seasons—the seasons of prayer—these chinks and crevices may open a little wider, and a little more of God's light may enter in. And the seasons of keenest prayer may be the times of great happiness and great sorrow. For when we feel most deeply, we shall be most attuned to pray. Strange, too, it is that in prayer we realise ourselves and forget ourselves. The higher self is awakened; the lower self is subdued. How the prayer of one man that strength may be given to another is helpful to that other, I do not pretend to understand, but the influence of soul upon soul is so subtle and mysterious that I, for one, am disposed to believe that such prayers are not only inevitable, but also reasonable, and not only reasonable, but efficacious. We may pray for others as well as for ourselves. And if we *may*, we *should*.

Moreover, prayer is not mere petition even for spiritual benefits. It does not merely *ask* for resignation, strength, insight, humility, and the like. Prayer is also, as I have said, communion. To many persons of high spiritual purity it is more communion

than petition. It is to them a sort of conversation with God; it is a sort of intense sense that they are drawing nigh to, that they are entering into the presence of, the beloved Source of Life and Goodness and Truth. Prayer may be at once the keenest activity and the most perfect rest. If we are in the presence of some one we greatly care for, we may be intensely conscious of that presence—our minds are the very reverse of sleepy,—and yet we may feel wonderfully at rest. So for these highly spiritual persons prayer brings the sense of divine nearness, and the sense of the divine presence. They are very conscious indeed of what they are doing,—they are conscious, it may be said, that something *is going on* —but, at the same time, there is rest for them and perfect peace. What is going on is, on the one hand, their own spiritual activity, but, on the other hand, it is *also*, as I believe, the activity of the Divine Source.

It is very important that teachers and parents should tell children that they cannot expect to find and possess and receive all the benefits of prayer at once or very soon. But they must not relax or abandon the habit, which in after life it may be difficult to acquire again. Let them not be *too greatly* troubled because at any time they think that their prayers are mechanical, or that they do not *experience* all the happiness or satisfaction which it is said that prayer can give or has given. It is not prayer that is at fault, and it is not necessarily themselves. The experience and the help and the satisfaction may come gradually. The best persons do not *always* feel the benefit of prayer. They feel it now and then, and in different degrees and ways. We must ask and suggest to children not to think that it is of no use to pray, because these high experiences of

which they have been told or have heard do not readily come to them. Here, as in other departments of religion, let them learn to *look forward*. The expectant—the humbly waitful—attitude of mind is so much more wholesome than the idea that everything ought to be realised all at once. The beginnings of prayer in the child and the young may be halting and difficult. But help may be given them in prayer as in other things. The perfect prayer may sometimes be the crown and fruition of a long life of humble and strenuous endeavour. But let not even imperfect prayers, vague prayers, stumbling prayers, inarticulate prayers, be despised.

For in prayer, man can pour out his soul to the unseen Father. By the laws of his nature and of God's, such a prayer will (as we believe) be *heard*. His aspirations, longings, troubles and sorrows are disclosed; and in the very disclosure, in the very "casting of the burden" upon God, the burden is lightened. It is not for us to give to such prayers their rules and their limits. Sufficient for us to believe that there is a true relation between the Source and the Tributary, a true influence from the Father upon the Child.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SERVICE OF GOD—OF HOLINESS, REVERENCE AND LOVE

One of my judges wrote warningly about this chapter: "You are getting more and more abstract." I have no doubt that the judge was right. But I fear I cannot greatly change unless I become unnatural. And if parents and teachers are to be helped at all by this book, it will be, I think, because of a certain spontaneity in it. I have written just as the ideas came into my mind: if I alter the first draft too much, any such merit will be destroyed, and I much doubt whether any other will come. But the warning is none the less useful. And I hope that parents and teachers may be able to find concrete instances for my abstractions, and thus make what I have tried to urge more living and less hard.

Another of my judges went farther still in uncompromising criticism, and wrote: "This chapter is very helpful for adults, but out of place in a book for children." Well, the book has now become a book for adults, and it is for them to pass on its teaching in more suitable form to the children with whom they are in contact. I am not sure that the conception of "holiness" is too abstract for children. There is, however, a good deal in the judge's opinion that one must begin by asking

for reverence, and by showing it to consist, in smaller details than I have mentioned in the text. "The child's idea of reverence," says the judge, "is, for example, expressed in his thinking before he says his prayers, in behaving decently in synagogue and in his religious exercises generally, in putting his best into such 'exercises' instead of going through them perfunctorily. He must be careful of his language, avoid ugly thoughts, behave well when nobody sees him except God, and so on. His love of God must be shown in his kindness and consideration for those who are less strong or smaller than himself, or, again, for those who render him services, as, for example, his nurse, his teacher, the housemaid, the shopkeeper, and so on. From little duties we must pass on to bigger duties; but mere vague abstraction, mere general teaching, and high sentiments, are of scanty or no use to the child, and may even be regarded as 'tall talk' with no relation to actual facts. They may then do rather harm than good."

I urge my readers to ponder well over these criticisms, and not to let my well-intentioned remarks hinder the very object they have in view. Another of my judges, however, whom I have consulted, assures me that I am right, at least to this extent. "Religion," he says, "is not a mere bundle of separate truths, just as morality is not a mere bundle of separate rules. One must beware of losing principles in details. Though the great ideas need illustration, and also require simplification, in their practical adaptation to child-life, nevertheless the ideas must also be presented in the most general terms. Especially is this necessary in teaching Judaism, which otherwise may too easily become an agglomeration of disconnected maxims, duties and habits. Though the child may not at once understand the great principles, they should be stated, so that, interpreted at first only

by simplest illustrations, they may eventually form an element of the adult's spiritual and moral life."

I POINTED out that early man sought to have dealings or relations with the divine powers in which he believed for the sake of himself and for his own advantage. He hoped to prevent the powers from harming him; he tried to induce them to benefit him, or to do what he wanted; to induce them to help his friends, or to injure his enemies: so he gave them gifts, or prayed to them, or honoured them, in order that by these means he might win their favour or turn away their ill-will. He served the gods, if what he did can be called service, in order to benefit himself.

In one sense he was right. All worship of God, all service of God, are, in one sense, intended for our benefit, and not for the benefit of God. If all synagogues and churches were closed to-morrow throughout England, and nobody went for five whole years to synagogue or church, the perfection of God would not be impaired. He would still remain as before, perfectly wise and good. It is man who would suffer, not God. Public worship is for man's sake and not for God's sake.

But there is a sense in which the true service of God helps God, or, at any rate, helps his cause. We no longer think we can serve God by giving him material gifts; by sacrificing to him sheep and oxen, by building in his honour magnificent temples. We may for very good reasons like to build beautiful synagogues and temples, but they are not intended to benefit God. The only way in which we can be said to help God is by the increase of righteousness and knowledge. The tiny partner can help and

please the Divine Head by becoming as good and as wise as he can, and by seeking to diminish evil and ignorance. The subject can help the king by upholding his kingship; the child can help the father by co-operating in his loving intentions. And if God aims at a righteous earth, man forwards that aim by striving after righteousness. This is the only service of God which may be said to serve him, in the sense of not only doing that which he desires us to do, but in the sense of fulfilling the divine purpose and of helping in its speedier realisation.

We may also believe that God desires man to be not only good and wise, but also happy, and that he who, in good and wise ways, adds to human happiness, is truly serving God.

But are we to say that the public worship of God is in *no* sense a service which we render him? The answer must be that it is in *no* sense a service if we think of God as becoming "better off," or as being made better, through the worship, for God cannot be "better off," or be made better, than he is. But it *is* a service in the sense that such a worship is a glad homage which we bring to our Lord and our Father. It *is* a service in the sense that it may, or does, make us better fitted (as all true prayer, whether private or public, can make us better fitted) for the advancement of goodness and of truth. It *is* a service in the sense that the public recollection of God by man, the public confession of his perfection, his righteousness and his love, may, even like pure private prayer (for which, be it remembered, public prayer offers excellent opportunities), be pleasing in his sight. I do not think that the phrase: "May what we are now doing, may our prayer and worship, be pleasing

in thy sight," is an infringement of God's perfection, or that it attributes to God the feelings of man. For we hold that the divine perfection can go together with caring and feeling. And why may we not assume that God cares for and likes the right behaviour of his human children, whether towards one another or towards him? We must not limit the infinite capacities of the Divine Being, except when we can perceive that by acting in a certain way he would be violating his own laws and involved in self-contradiction. We may, therefore, hold that public worship may rightly be described as divine service in the sense that such worship, involving as it does praise and prayer, glad homage and aspiring trust, and tending as it does to goodness and to happiness, is acceptable before God, and is a gift which he does not despise. Let us remember that prayer is not only petition and not only even communion; it is also praise. And true praise is gratitude, but even more: it is the acknowledgment of God, the recognition and adoration of those very qualities in him which (because of the "kinship") can be and should be imitated by man. And such prayer is also acceptance of the divine will; it is the vocal expression of the faith that he knows our wants better than we know them ourselves.

But much more important still in our relation to God than the few hours which we may give in the week to public worship, are all the other hours which we spend in other ways. If the Divine Being may rightly be considered as our Lord and our Father, the source of our life, and especially of that part of our life which makes us what we are—other than the plant or the animal—then surely we may fitly speak of our *duties* toward God. If we have duties

towards the physical and earthly king, we have duties towards the spiritual King also; if we have duties towards the earthly and physical father, we have duties towards the spiritual Father as well. If there are ideals of behaviour towards the one, there are also ideals of behaviour towards the other. In one sense every rule of right conduct towards our fellow-men is a rule of right conduct towards God, for the truest service of God is what has often been called the service of man. He who does his duty to man has done the largest portion of his duty to God, and the love of our heavenly Father can best be shown in our love of his earthly children. It might even be argued that there can be no religious duties properly so called which are not moral duties. A loving deed, or a duteous act, done *directly* to man, is *indirectly* done to God. You cannot serve the one without serving the other, and you cannot serve God *except* by serving man..

I think that, generally speaking, this is true so far as our actions are concerned: when we are doing our duty, and showing our love, to our neighbour, we are also performing our duty to God; but the thought of our relation to God and of his relation to us enables us to perform our duty to our neighbour in a particular way. And, as regards ourselves, there are virtues which, I think, are chiefly caused by, or chiefly arise in us because of, our thought of God.

As regards their duty to their fellow-men, the thought of God and of what they owe to him enables men to perform that duty with singular intensity and fervour. It gives a courage which rises superior to all disappointments, an energy which buoys them up against weariness, ingratitude and failure. It gives

them a perseverance and devotion, a patience and endurance, which often add a touch of heroism to commonplace lives. The duty to man becomes not so much a duty as an offering—the best the giver can offer—to God, and as an offering the duty is transfigured. *God guarantees its value*, and in one sense he may be said to guarantee its ultimate success. Because God is, no deed of rectitude and love can wholly be wasted. This thought has illumined and strengthened many hard and painful lives.

One of my judges erased the sentence beginning "God guarantees its value," whereas I assign to that sentence particular importance! But perhaps it is desirable that I should more fully explain it. What I mean is this. If I did not believe in God, human love and human righteousness would seem to me just chance appearances upon the earth; their deeper reality, their truer meaning, their relation to the universe at large, are all (to my mind and faith) only assured if their cause is an eternal and divine righteousness, an eternal and divine love. The divine righteousness explains the human righteousness. But it does more than explain it. It guarantees its value. It shows and proves that whatever may be the temporal and earthly origin of human righteousness, its true and ultimate origin is divine. The divine transfigures the human. And the divine guarantees its *success*. Because the eternal righteousness *is*, therefore human righteousness cannot be a failure. It is gathered up, and finds its purpose, in the sweep and range of the divine. The sentence which my judge erased contains the thought upon which my whole faith depends; it comforts me in sorrow; it sustains me in disappointment; it consoles me in failure.

I have said that man's duty to his fellow-man becomes an offering to God. But it is also turned from a duty into a passion. Duteous deeds become loving deeds. Rectitude becomes love. The great feature in love is its driving force: its passion, its fire. A man can be righteous in a negative sort of way: he can do his "duty" within narrow limits: he may rarely do *wrong*, but he need not necessarily do a large quantity of *right*. But a man cannot be loving in a negative sort of way. Love impels; love urges; love asks and suggests and evokes sacrifice and heroism. And this passion of love, which drives men on to more than the average, to more than "enough," which, as I say, impels them to constant and dauntless efforts, to unseen and unknown sacrifices, to hard and painful deeds of devotion and self-surrender,—this passion of love for man is aroused and sustained by the love of God. It is the love for a divine Person which reacts upon our conception of, and our relation to, the human person. It is supremely worth while to love man, for he bears within him the image and impress of the supreme and perfect God.

But not merely does the thought of God enable men to perform their duty to their fellow-men in a particular way (by which I mean a particularly fine way), but there are special virtues which it is able to foster or create. Such virtues are courage, resignation, hope, enthusiasm, purity, humility and serenity. All these are virtues which the thought of God, and how men ought to bear themselves upon earth before him, specially tend to plant and produce within their souls. We may sum up these religious virtues by saying that the thought of the relation of God to man, and of the right relation

of man to God, produces *holiness*. As our ancestors turned all ideals into laws, so they also turned this ideal into a law. That which man *can* be he should *strive* to be. He *can* love God: therefore he should *try* to love God. He can be holy: therefore he *should* be holy. The ideal is a duty. Therefore a fundamental duty of man towards God is to become holy. The imitation of the divine perfection is set up before man both as an ideal and a command.

It is important that children should have it tenderly and lovingly explained to them that they cannot be expected to "love God" all at once. It may happen that an imaginative child may experience hours of torture because he (or she) feels: "I do not love God, but I ought to love him. Therefore I am a sinner." As one of my judges writes: "We must try and show children that we have to use our whole lives to learn to love God properly and to feel that we love him. How are we to learn? Not by worrying over the matter, or even by thinking over it too much, but by practice, by loving. We may learn to love the greatest by loving the least. To think of and care for others may gradually bring to us, not only peace and happiness, but thankfulness to God and the love of God. Faithfulness to duty may gradually bring the deeper faith in God. Teachers and parents, when the need is discerned or divined, should explain to children (of, say, fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen) that religious doubt is not a sin, but that it is reasonable to try to *live* through (as well as sometimes to *think* through) our doubts, and through goodness to reach the knowledge of God. We are not to despair of ourselves, or of our religion, or of God, because we do not at once or continuously find in it or in him all the peace and happiness of which

the preacher speaks to us in his sermons. Patient humility, quiet and faithful goodness, may often help us to the right road towards the goal."

Holiness is a lovely and beautiful word, for it brings up before our minds the idea of a lovely and beautiful character. A many-sided character also. We think of the man or woman who is holy as one who lives consciously and delightedly in the presence of God. Such a person does not feel: "I must do this, or I must not do that, because I cannot forget the divine Task-master and Lord, who will punish me or reward me according as I do this or that"; but he rather feels: "I must seek to do the will of him who is my Lord, my Father, and my Joy." We may even say that he has reached a higher stage of freedom. He turns towards God and goodness as the sunflower turns towards the sun. Temptations are largely overcome; in strength and purity of purpose, in gladness and humility, he seeks to live according to his Father's will. To him, no duty, however lowly, is common, for through every duty there shines a heavenly light. He has tamed and trained every earthly passion to be obedient to the higher will. He is strong, buoyant, serene.

There are two qualities which we especially associate with holiness. The one is purity. We feel that a holy or "saintly" person should be clean in body, heart and mind. He is not yet a holy man who has still to "wrestle" with many temptations, or who has to occupy much time in getting rid of ugly thoughts or wrong desires. He only is holy who has left that stage of spiritual progress behind. His inner house is now thoroughly cleansed, and only pure thoughts and good desires fill its chambers. Moreover, he is truly humble. He is not the smallest

scrap conceited or priggish. He himself would hotly deny that he is a holy man. What he is and does is far below what he should be and do. His ideal is ever beyond his grasp. He does not put himself above his fellows. Just the holy man it is who best recognises in every human form the image of God. Of the worst of men he is inclined to say: "Had I been born with his body and brain, and lived in his environment, or been subjected to his temptations, I might have been even as he is." He lives with his fellows, and never looks down upon them. If he has any worth, that worth is the gift of God; he ascribes to God such virtue as he possesses, and to himself his faults.

There are two feelings towards God which all men should seek to acquire, and which all men in greater or less degree are able to acquire: reverence and love. Some might say: fear and love, but the right fear of God is best expressed by the word *reverence*. For it is not like the fear that a man might have of a tiger: it is rather like the fear that a man has of his own conscience and of its disapproval. We feel shame at having incurred the disapproval of God. We fear to incur this divine disapproval, not because of its results, but in itself. Reverence includes this kind of fear on the one side, and it includes a sort of hushed adoration upon the other. We reverence that which is greatly above us in wisdom and in goodness. We bow down before the Perfect in amazement, admiration and awe. The true fear of God is not the fear of punishment; just as the true love of God is not the hope of reward.

It is undoubtedly true that reward and punishment have been regarded as features of the utmost importance in the relation of God to man. The

imagination of man has invented horrible fancies about shocking punishments after death which God would inflict upon earthly sinners. There will be something to say about this later on. Meanwhile, we should, I think, believe that God does punish and that God does reward, but not in the crude fantastic way that men have too often supposed. Sin brings its punishment on earth ; it causes misery ; it makes the sinner more sinful. The reward of a duty done is another duty to do ; the consequence of a transgression is that sin becomes easier, said the Rabbis. What will be the lot of the sinner after death, and how his soul will be purified of its taint of sin, we do not know. But of this we can be sure. The final object of God's punishments must be to purify. So far from asking God to " let us off " punishment, we might more reasonably ask him to make the punishment come soon. The one punishment we have to fear is that frequent earthly punishment of sin, namely, that we become more inclined to sin again. There can be no fear of Perfection: only confidence and trust: only wonder and admiration: only abasement and humility: only reverence: never fear.

Even as reverence is without the taint of a fear of punishment, so true love is without the taint of a hope of reward. Or rather : as there is only one true fear : the fear of sin itself ; so there is only one true reward for which we may rightly hope : the reward of becoming better, of knowing God more fully, of living more intently as in his presence. This reward we may rightly believe that God will give to those who serve him well. What will a really deep love of God help us to do ? We can at least see what it makes *some* people do. For I hope that we all know a few people who are filled

with the love of God. And yet unless we know them very well, we may not know of their love; for they do not wear it on their sleeve. They keep what is most sacred in their lives away from the sight of the passer-by: they are very humble and make no show. But I am convinced that I am right when I say that the love of God helps to make a man truthful, eager and brave, patient, happy and contented. It helps to make a man realise that all his powers, whether big or small, are gifts and trusts, which must not be wasted, neglected, or turned to ill account. If we loved God truly, we should be more loving to our fellow-creatures: we should be more humble and unselfish. Unkind thoughts would trouble us less often: envy and spite would flee away.

One more thought before I close this chapter. The reverence of God does not make us think so much of what he will *do* for us in the *future* as what he *is* for us *now*. And so too with the love of God. The holy man who reverences and loves God with all his heart and mind does not, I think, worry much about the future. He leaves that to the wisdom and goodness of God. He is happy with God in the present. The perfect, living source of goodness and of wisdom he cannot choose but love. "Thou shalt love God," says the Law. No love which man is able to give to God can be too great and keen, for it must always fall short of what perfection can rightly claim. We "needs must love the Highest" even when we do not *see* it, but only have *faith* in its existence. We cannot but *want* to love perfect goodness; yet we always *ought* to love him who is perfection more than we already do.

CHAPTER IX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RACE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

As regards this chapter I must confess that it may be, as indeed it seems, almost wholly unsuited to younger children. Yet, as it deals with an important subject, and may have its interest to adult persons, I have allowed it to remain. Moreover, though the adult teacher does not try to teach a child all that he knows himself, nevertheless even his elementary lessons must be more effective if, behind what he says, and in the recesses of his own mind, there lies an understanding, or at least a consideration, of problems bigger than the child can or need or ought to face. Hence it is not wrong for me to discuss, for the use of the teacher, matters which are not meant for the taught.

As to one side of the questions examined in this chapter, one of the judges is perhaps right in suggesting that the "savage" of whom I speak must not be classed with the idiot or the vicious. He is perhaps less a "puzzle" than I have supposed. The savage is, as the critic says, only a savage to the civilised. And if savages act up to their lights, they are doing as much as any of us can do. God may accept their limited righteousness no less than he accepts our fuller righteousness. The difference between them and us is so much less than the difference between us and him.

A phenomenon of child-life which I should like to treat here—if it were not rather off my track—is the fascination which the young feel for stories about savages. In part no doubt the charm arises from the adventures, the dangers, the hair-breadth escapes. But it is, perhaps, also due to the child's unconscious sense of community. The child, as has now so often been said, goes through, in his own growth, many of the stages through which the human race has gone in its advance from primitive to civilised life. Once more, then, we may hope that we get a glimpse of God as Father, leading the race, as he leads the individual, upwards through successive stages, nearer to a destined and distant goal.

I WANT in this chapter to go back again to the idea of God as Ruler or King, and to speak of certain consequences which follow from it.

We accepted the thought of God as our king, even though we had to supplement it by the thought of God as our Father. By calling God our king, we mean, among other things, that the course of human history is known to and controlled by God.

The subject is one of very great difficulty. We cannot go into particulars, and say of every incident in human history: "This incident was the will of God." We can only say *that* in the very general sense in which we might say of everything which happens: "It has only taken place because God allowed it to take place." In that sense we should say of wars and crimes and calamities and follies: "They have only taken place because God has allowed them to take place." And such "allowances" would merely form part of the huge problem of evil.

We can, indeed, see that creatures like ourselves

require a large measure of freedom. Individuals and nations had and have to be allowed to go wrong, in order to go right; to make mistakes, in order to succeed. The failures and errors were and are needful for such creatures as we, in order to reach the higher results of liberty, namely, righteousness and knowledge.

In other worlds God has perchance created beings who, from the first, have always done what is wise and good. On earth he has created beings who have had to progress through failure, who are only gradually becoming wise and good. But it must be borne in mind that our own faults are not *excused* by this. For we can conquer our faults. And more is rightly demanded of each one of us to-day than was demanded of our ancestors in the days of old.

We do not, then, look for the fulfilment of the divine will in the details of history. It is only very occasionally, and with great diffidence and reserve, that we may say of certain events: "Surely these events are part of the divine will. Surely these events were controlled or directed or intended by God." When people have sought to trace the "finger of God" in the details of human affairs, they have often made grave and painful mistakes; or they have been prompted by partialities for their own nation, creed, or party.

But, nevertheless, we do believe that the course of human history has not been, and is not, outside the will and control of God. Our own particular religion goes a few steps farther. It declares and believes that the course of human history is, in spite of set-backs, a divinely intended course of progress from ignorance to knowledge, from savagery to civilisation, from crude and low ideas about goodness

to purer and nobler ideas, from superstition and cruelty to enlightenment and compassion. What some people call development, and others call evolution, we accept as the deliberate will of the divine Ruler. The development or evolution *is* his deliberate will.

We know that this progress has been terribly slow, and that it has been accompanied, so far as we can judge, by serious set-backs and by appalling waste. Comparatively civilised nations have been ruined by savages and barbarians; many barbarous and savage races have never developed into civilisation at all; while recent investigation has shown us that human history is far older than used to be supposed, and that, therefore, the development of righteousness and of the knowledge of God has been painfully and puzzlingly slow. It is possible that man has himself been "developed" out of the animal, so that if we could trace our own ancestors far enough back we should ultimately come to ancestors who were not human at all.[1]

Why all this long development? Why all this apparent waste? Why all this long painful history of slow movement from animal to lowest savage, and from lowest savage to civilisation?

We do not know. We cannot tell. Still it is, I think, much more cheering and comforting to believe that man has slowly *risen* than to believe

[1] I may mention here that one of my critics, though unfortunately he gives no reasons for his opinion, very strongly objects to the possible evolution of "man" from the animal (to which I have several times alluded in the course of this chapter) being mentioned to "children." But surely the modern child is sure to hear of Darwin at school, and he may even be taught "Darwinism" before he is fourteen or fifteen. Nor do I see why it is unfitting that children should be taught that God "evolved" man from animals, while it is not unfitting that they should be taught that God developed and civilised man from very uncivilised savages.

(as has been widely believed) that he suddenly *fell*. A slow *ascent* fits in better with our conception of God than a sudden *fall*. There is comfort, there is stimulus, in the thought that mankind has developed in righteousness and in wisdom from the lowliest beginnings, and that mankind in the mass may develop still more; that the total amount of righteousness and wisdom in the world may, so to speak, be larger in two thousand years' time than it is now, and that, in some respects, the very content of righteousness and wisdom may be purer and larger than it is now, and their application wider.

The doctrine that the general body of mankind —the total inhabitants of the earth living at one and the same time—have slowly advanced, and are even slowly advancing, to higher ideas and higher practices and finer applications of righteousness, to a higher standard of social justice, to higher conceptions of religion,—this doctrine harmonises with the fundamental teaching of Judaism about a perfect God who rules and cares. It does not explain everything; much has to be left to faith; but it does help us a great deal.

I said that it is difficult (and, indeed, it is also dangerous) to pick out special events in history, and ascribe them to the special intervention of God. But of certain events, nevertheless, we are driven to say: "These events seem to fulfil the divine purpose in a special way," or, "In these events it seems not unjustifiable to discern the finger of God."

We may, for example, believe that God has assigned to certain peoples and races certain temporary or permanent duties or work. It may be that such peoples were unconscious of their office or mission, but we, who look at things from

a distance, may believe in it none the less. It does not follow that for the actions and achievements of such peoples there were not "natural" causes. God works through law, and not without or against law. For example, what Greece and Rome did for the world may, without presumption, be said to show the purpose of God. The divine purpose is not outside of the human action; it is *in* it. The human action bears marks of the imperfection of humanity. Even in those actions in which, and even in those men in whom, we can most truly say: "Here is the will of God," even there we find God working by imperfect means, and even there we often find a strange mixture of the human and the divine.

If we look at the world to-day, may we not venture to suppose that our own country and our own people have had, and have, a certain destiny to fulfil, a certain part to play, in the human and universal drama? May we not believe, even in spite of the failings and errors shown in our history, and the sins and faults and pettinesses of those who have controlled and made it, that the "finger of God" is in it, and that the British Empire is part of the divine will, and carries out the divine purpose for the upward movement and progress of the world? In spite of many difficulties, many persons do so believe; they hold that the British Empire is an instrument of the divine will in a *special* sense, and not merely in the general sense in which we may say that whatever exists, exists through the sanction, and fulfils the will, of the Supreme Being.

We are here, however, more specially concerned with the growth of our knowledge of God and of our ideas about goodness. In these matters human

growth has come from many sources and in many ways. One quarter of the globe has developed in different ways, and along different lines, from another quarter, and the highest ideals of the one have not been the same, and perhaps for indefinite ages will not be the same, as the highest ideals of the other. How different, for example, are the religious ideals of the best and wisest people in India from the religious ideals of the best and wisest people in Europe even to-day.

So far as we can venture to interpret the will of God, and humbly read it in the pages of history, we believe that to our own race and brotherhood there has been assigned by the divine Ruler a great part in the history and development of true religion. We believe that in the history of no other race can we more truly discern the purpose of God. We further hold and believe that certain persons of our brotherhood have been specially illumined by God to carry forward this special purpose, and to help in the development of true religion.

For as God controls human history, and yet has given the human race freedom, so, too, is it with individuals. I have spoken of our belief that he " helps " us to be good. Our faith includes a belief that there is a mysterious influence of the divine mind upon the human mind, of the divine spirit upon the human spirit. We do not know the laws of that influence, but we believe in its existence : we believe that over and above the fact that every man is created in the divine image, God also specially illumines specially chosen men, in order that, through their means, he may help us to learn more about righteousness and about himself. We can see that this illumination is given in different degrees and

even kinds to different persons, and that this divine illumination never turns those who receive it into mere echoes or phonographs of the divine knowledge and will. We may suppose that such *complete* illumination, such a driving out of the human by the divine, would be an impossibility. The man always remains with his human limitations and imperfections, and the message of God is always set forth by man with human limitations and imperfections. We are left to disentangle, as best we can, the true from the false, the permanent from the transitory, the gold from the mingled ore. Yet we none the less believe, imperfect as are the message and messenger, that the messenger has not spoken without the help of God, and that in his message there is an element which we may rightly call divine. This help from God to such messengers we call inspiration, and the message, so delivered, we call inspired.

Of the religious mission of our Jewish race and brotherhood, and of the inspired messengers who have appeared among them, more will be said later on. Meanwhile it has to be remembered that inspiration is not confined, thank God, to one race and to one age. We may devoutly believe that to many races and to many ages God has granted the help I have indicated, and that his divine illumination has come to many souls in different lands and different eras. We, moreover, believe that God illumines men to-day. In fact, we cannot mark off the limits to that help and that illumination, nor can we say where "*special*" illumination (or inspiration) ends and where *general* illumination or help begins. Through his light we see light, as it says in one of the Psalms. It is only when that light is very great, and seems to come suddenly and powerfully, and

when the recipient of it is strongly conscious that what he sees and says has come to him from without (though in another sense it is intensely inward), that we speak of special inspiration. But we do not mean by that to deny or disparage the help which God gives to us all, or to attempt to distinguish with impossible accuracy the degrees and kinds of the inspiration and the illumination which have come to men from the one and only Source.

To sum up, then, what has so far been said. We hold and believe that God controls, and has a purpose for, the history of man. We believe that the race of man has progressed and is progressing—if slowly, yet surely—from a poorer righteousness to a richer righteousness, and from lower, cruder, more erroneous ideas about God to higher, purer and truer ideas about him. What the end of this progress will be is another matter about which I must say a few words later on.

Again, we hold and believe that as there is a progress for the race there is a progress for the individual. It is not enough for the individual to serve his race. He is also an end in himself. Every child of God is, we feel, not merely a means, but also an end. Not even of the wisest and the best of men can it be said that their development on earth is complete. To all men the human limitation applies, and just perhaps of the noblest and wisest of men we feel most acutely that if the barrier of flesh were broken down, the soul would soar into unimaginable heights of blessedness and truth. And yet from another reason we feel that a future must surely be given by our Father to the millions of ordinary people who have not known him and loved him as dearly and purely as even on earth he can be,

and has been, known and loved. We think tenderly of the millions of savages, or of the millions of bad people in every age and land, of the degraded, the stunted, the idiots. For all these are nevertheless the children of God. What purpose have *they* had, what destiny have *they* fulfilled? What upward limit have *they* reached in comparison with human possibilities, even so far as these have been revealed to us?

These thoughts and these questions force us to believe that it is not enough for the *race* to have a future; it is not enough for the *race* to progress and improve. What is the race except the individuals who compose it? Why should millions of men have lived and died for the sake of those who are to be born in distant ages? We refuse to believe that the coming into existence, and the passing out of existence, of endless individual souls can be so accounted for and explained. We dare to believe that when our primordial ancestors ceased to be *animal* and became *human*, they were granted the glory and the responsibility of another life beyond this life. With the reception of the divine image, and the capacity for righteousness and the knowledge of God, they must, we believe, have mysteriously received the gift of immortality. We refuse to believe that the history of the individual man is terminated upon earth. Even for the wrecks and the wastage, the degraded and the feeble, the ignorant and the vicious, we are driven to believe that other opportunities in another life or lives are in store for them. The progress of the individual cannot end before it has fairly begun. But of this great hope, of this great doctrine, of immortality, I must briefly speak again in a later chapter.

CHAPTER X

OF SIN AND ITS CAUSES—OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS—OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

In this chapter, too, there are many things which are unsuitable for children. On the other hand, what I have here said may, I think, be helpful for parents and teachers, and may suggest thoughts which will issue in suitable teaching. For the conceptions of human sin and human goodness, of punishment and reward, are not only fundamental, but are constantly cropping up. Teachers and parents ought to receive suggestions about them which may start independent trains of thought, and may also filter down into their actual conversations with children.

One of my critics holds that we should not say too much to children about conflict in right-doing. "Children," he says, "born in nice homes breathe an atmosphere of goodness and truth. They are good and truthful without effort. They do not want to tell lies. They are just natural in their unaffected and simple goodness. Your history of the origin of sin might make them morbid, and inclined to introspection and self-analysis. They should be simply told that when they are naughty and disobey conscience, they are doing wrong, but that they need not do wrong. Tell them simply that there is an ideal of goodness always beyond them, so that they can never be as good as they ought to be. If they think they can catch up the ideal, they are making a sad mistake, and

they ought to be ashamed of themselves, and ask God to give them better brains to see more clearly, and better hearts to try more strenuously. This line of thought, which can be a good deal developed and amplified, seems to me more healthy than yours." But is there in truth so much difference between us? It will be useful for my readers to compare us and to decide.

Again, my judge seems puzzled by my remarks about effortless goodness being higher than the goodness of struggle. He has perhaps forgotten the "Ethics" of Aristotle, from which my remarks are ultimately taken. But I ought to have explained more fully that there may be effortless goodness on a low level, and goodness with struggle on a high level. The second will be much nobler than the first. One must compare together similar degrees of goodness, or similar actions. Only so would the comparison be fair. And I ought also to have said that when effort has ceased in one direction, it should begin in another. In this way we go on from stage to stage, and from one bit of goodness to another. We may rightly continue to struggle, but not about the same things. I quite agree that we are "meant to struggle." But we are also meant to conquer. The critic is a great admirer of Browning. Let him recall "Rabbi ben Ezra," and especially stanzas xii. to xix.

Finally, my critic, from large and deep experience, commenting upon my insistence that there is a certain relation in the long run between righteousness and prosperity, says very gravely: "I think it would be well to advise people not to attempt to decide the relations between happiness and goodness. What is happiness to one person is often not in the least happiness to another. The most staggering thing in the beginnings of social work is the sufferings of good people through uncontrollable poverty,—the sufferings of intensely devoted mothers

whose children have to 'go without,' though the mothers and the children are as good as other mothers and other children whose lot is easier and 'happier.' The suggestion that we can find a relation between goodness and happiness (without a very careful definition of that happiness) seems to me dangerously comfortable for the rich child and horribly comfortless for the poor child. It may help to produce an arm-chair philosopher who orders another bottle of champagne for himself, while he says: 'There is no unemployment. Men prefer to drink, and then excuse themselves by saying that they can get no work.'" This warning of my large-hearted and widely-experienced judge is of considerable value, though I still think that to deny any kind of correspondence whatever between what we may roughly call "external happiness" and virtue is not only repugnant to Judaism, but also to reason. But the exceptions are painfully numerous, and any attempt to point the moral of a lack of correspondence may lead to shallow judgments on the old exploded lines of Job's friends such as are justly repudiated by the judge.

We have seen that our religion holds that God controls the destinies of the human race. He is a real Ruler, though a real freedom is allowed to man.

Now, the rule of God is always a rule of law. But we do not pretend to understand all the laws by which that rule is carried out. There are laws of the spirit as well as laws which determine the relation of material things to each other, but the spiritual laws are more delicate, and they are more difficult to discern. There are laws by which we become good, and laws by which we become bad. Both righteousness and sin produce their effects and

results upon others and upon ourselves. We have, however, to take account of something over and above the effects, through law, of our actions, thoughts and desires upon ourselves and others. For we have also to remember that the influence of God, and the action of the divine spirit upon the human spirit, may also intervene. This intervention is also according to laws, yet laws too subtle for us to understand, removed for ever from our calculations and assessments, and, nevertheless, as we believe, a real factor in the explanation of events.

We sometimes vaguely wonder why God did not start the human race at a more advanced stage. Why all those dim ages in which the human was evolved from the animal, and the civilised man from the savage? None can tell. But such questions are really futile. They are only varieties of the larger question: Why imperfection, why error, why sin? To these ultimate problems no answer can be given.

We may say with the Dean of St. Paul's, that "if we are here on our probation, it is plain that we must be confronted with much that for us is actual and positive evil. In no other way could the good will be exercised. In a world where the good met with no opposition, morality would be inert and useless, a functionless habit which could no more be called moral than the tendency of a stream to flow downhill. There can be no morality without temptation, no victory over evil without a real enemy. Evil, then, is the inseparable condition of good in the world of will, which is the world of souls on their probation."[1] But the Dean allows that such an argument is not "an adequate explanation of the problem of evil."

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, Second Series, p. 23.

Such an adequate explanation has not been and cannot "be given." Nor can we even say that *all* imperfection will be utterly removed from the human spirit beyond the grave. For surely there can, after all, be only one *perfect* being—God himself, God alone. Though there may be creatures with powers vastly greater and nobler than our own, perfection must surely be the prerogative of the Divine Being. Not without a certain deep justification did the author of the Book of Job write the lines: "He puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he charges with error." However superior angels or other superhuman beings may be to man, they, no less than we, are removed far from the supreme perfection of God.

But to come back to man. We speak of human ignorance and wickedness and sin. Perhaps, at this point, it is well to ask what we mean by that last short word. What is sin?

If we assume that man has been developed from the animal, we may say with good reason that the first evidence of his humanity appeared when he was first dimly conscious of wrong-doing and of sin. Man came to goodness by also knowing sin. He could not, it appears, have risen to the one without falling into the other. To rise above the beast he had to be able to fall below the beast. The cow is conscious of neither goodness nor sin. The humanity of man began by his feeling and realising that such and such actions were right, and such and such actions were wrong, and that he sometimes did the one and sometimes the other. He was now pleased with himself and now annoyed. At that stage was born conscience.

Wrong-doing is, therefore, as old as right-doing,

and the latter has needed the former to come into existence at all.

(It does not follow that sin must always dog righteousness, or that sin cannot indefinitely diminish and righteousness indefinitely increase. All that I mean is that man, as it would seem, had to *learn* what goodness is, and how to become good, by realising what badness is, and how to do wrong. The two grew up together, and were learned together, and in contrast to each other. The *non-moral* being could only become *moral* by knowing what was *immoral*.)

All right-doing seems to be a fulfilment of some law, whether the law of the state, or of conscience, or of God. All wrong-doing seems to be a violation of some law. Against what law did primitive man first sin? What law was he first conscious of fulfilling? Into these questions I cannot enter. Let us, if you will, assume that he first felt an obligation to fulfil the rules of his tribe, and that he was conscious of shame if he violated them, or of satisfaction when he observed them. Later on, perhaps, these rules appeared to him to be the will of superhuman powers. Thus in violating and fulfilling them he was violating or fulfilling the rules of the gods. In any case, since he accepted these rules as *his* rules, they became the dictates of his conscience. Thus he was gradually conscious of faults committed against the rules of his tribe, against the will of the gods, and against the inward proclamations of his own conscience.

We are still conscious of the same three kinds of wrong-doing even to-day. We violate the rules and laws of society and the state, or we act against the inward voice of conscience, or we infringe what

we hold or believe to be the laws of God. It is in the last case that our wrong-doing takes the special form which is known as *sin*. All three forms of wrong-doing may coincide. That is to say, the violation of the law of the state may also be in my eyes a violation of the law of God, and a violation of the law or voice of conscience. To steal, for example, is a violation of all three "laws." Yet there may also be laws of God which are not laws of the state. Thus to love God is a law of God, but it is not a law of the state. On the other hand, there may be laws of the state which we cannot regard as laws of God. The unjust laws under which our brethren were oppressed in Russia and Roumania were certainly not laws of God. As the tried and sifted conscience is, as I believe, the voice of the "divine image within us," in which we are created, it seems to me clear that the law of conscience is *also* a law of God, and no law can be for me a law of God which is not *also* a law of my conscience. Of these matters we shall, however, have to speak again.

Sin, then, is wrong-doing which we commit against God. But as God is for us the source of righteousness and its guardian and guarantee, every violation of righteousness, every infraction of the moral law, is an offence against God. To those who believe in God there can be no wrong-doing which is not also sin.

There is no man, it somewhere says in the Bible, who does not sin. Perhaps for indefinite ages we may say, "There is no man who will not sin." Why is it necessary that all should sin? We may, perhaps, more rightly remark that it is not *necessary*, but it is *inevitable*. Yet it is not very easy to explain why, though we witness the same experience

in every child, and have gone through the same experience ourselves.

Perhaps we may first of all remark that all rules set limits to human actions. Men have many appetites and desires and fancies, and upon these the rules of the tribe and of society impose restrictions. The rules are irksome; the desires are strong; the satisfaction of the desires is pleasant. So man breaks the rules, and is conscious of wrong-doing. From negative rules the morality of man advances—I cannot here trace how—to positive rules. Certain things must be done: difficult and painful things. But they are not always done, or they are done imperfectly. Man is weak, lazy, wilful. His desires go one way; the rules point to another way. Hence the conflict; and from the conflict sometimes issues victory, and sometimes defeat. Thus the rules form or suggest an *ideal*. The ideal would be to obey all the rules in the very best possible way. As man advances and improves, so the rules or ideals mount up and increase, not in number necessarily, but in quality and in severity. At last the ideal stands before him, sublime, impelling, unattainable. The idea of perfection constantly urges him forward; but made as he is of flesh and spirit, he not only fails to reach it, but constantly violates the laws in which the ideal shapes its bidding. He uses his reason to satisfy desires and appetites which run counter to the dictates of the ideal, of the Law of Perfection, and so he falls below the animal who, in satisfying its desires, is never conscious that it is doing wrong. As he can act against the impulse of the moment, or rise superior to fear, anger, or whatever other passion it be, so by yielding to these passions, when the rule of Society, or Conscience, or God, bids him

refrain, *his* action, the counterpart of which is in the animal harmless and natural, becomes in him wrong-doing and sin.

Man, then, became man in his ascent from the animal by becoming conscious of good and evil, of righteousness and wrong-doing. He became man by recognising, in however dim a form, an *ought*, which was binding upon him and which he must try to fulfil. He became man by doing acts which he considered right, and acts which he considered wrong. Such is the constitution of man, such is his nature, that ever since he has emerged from the animal, this double tendency and these opposite sorts of actions have continued; we may rightly hope that the influence of the evil impulse will gradually become weaker, and that the influence of the good impulse will gradually become stronger, so that evil actions may tend to become less, and that good actions may tend to increase. But the entire cessation of the evil and the absolute predominance of the good (in such a way that every man should do, or refrain from doing, *nothing* with which his conscience could reproach him) represent a goal to which man may draw nearer and nearer, but which he can hardly expect to attain. For one thing, the nearer he draws to the ideal, the farther it recedes. It becomes greater and harder, as he becomes better; we can hardly conceive a good man *ever* thinking that he was as good as he *ought* to be; for the very fact that he thought so would almost inevitably show that he was not. On the other hand, it is most important to remember that the more we refrain from evil, and the more we actively practise goodness, the easier, in one vital sense, will goodness become. We acquire the habit of goodness.

Judaism has rightly taught that we should neither be indifferent nor despondent as regards our sinfulness or our sins. We are not to say: "I was *made* frail and weak. I was *made* in such a way that I am often bound to do what I know I ought not to do, and not to do what I know I ought to do. I am *bound* (such is human nature) to be tempted often, and sometimes to fall. Therefore I am not going to worry about my sins, or seek to conquer them, for I know that a complete conquest is impossible." Such reasoning would be cowardly and immoral. For though we are unable to achieve the goal, we may nevertheless advance a certain way towards it. As the old Rabbi put it: "It is not thine to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it." "Bound" as we are to fail now and then, there is a higher "obligation" which we are "bound" to fulfil—the obligation to try our utmost, and never to be content with the progress made. We are able to discern as an object of our life upon earth the duty of self-development. Life is a discipline, which none of us may shirk. Man, created in the divine image, is, just because of his nature, "bound" to recognise more and more clearly and intensely that he must seek to imitate the divine perfection, and draw nearer and nearer to the divine ideal.

No indifference, but also no despondency. We can advance; we can become better; we can conquer temptation; we can even conquer the sinfulness which our committed sins have caused, or which have caused them. Experience has proved the possibility—the experience of others and of ourselves. That we cannot reach perfection is a foolish reason for not striving as far towards it as may be

within our powers and prayers. We are not alone in the struggle with temptation and sinfulness, or in the struggle for a higher grade of moral perfection and of spiritual holiness. We are not alone: God is with us; his spirit is within us and without us; he grants us the mystery of his help.

Of this help there will be a little more to say in a few moments when some words have to be added about Repentance and Forgiveness. Meanwhile, let me lead up to that subject by speaking of another aspect of God's rule which has played a great part in human thought and in many religions (though not always for good), namely, the divine punishments and the divine rewards.

We have seen that God rules the world according to law. There is law in his relations and dealings with man. There is law in man's actions and in their influence upon his own character.

> Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
> And what we have been makes us what we are.

Our actions have results and effects: results and effects both upon others and upon ourselves.

If we take any average person to-day, we feel that when he has done a good action, he feels a certain sense of inward satisfaction and contentment; when he has done a bad action, he feels a certain discomfort, irritation or pain. I will not ask how these two feelings have grown up. That they now exist, and have for long existed, we all know. *We may, I think, regard these feelings as the true divine punishment, and the true divine reward, of wickedness and of righteousness.* Man is not mere reason; he has feeling as well as reason. If the painful right has been accomplished, reason approves, and, in

approving, causes a feeling of happiness or contentment. If a temptation has been yielded to, if a sin has been wrought, reason disapproves (even though reason played its part in the sin), and, in disapproving, causes a feeling of irritation, discomfort or pain. These feelings are the evidence of our true or higher nature: they are the witness of God.

Old as these feelings are—in their simplest and feeblest and most elementary form as old as man himself—they were not, at first, recognised as the blessings of God. Nor was it at first, or for long, believed that God's purpose is only blessing, that his punishments are, and can only be, blessings in disguise. The idea of punishment was very crude, both as regards the punishments of man and the punishments of God. The conception, so simple and obvious to us, that the object of punishment is to make people better, and to prevent them sinning again, was not clearly realised or understood.[1] People thought that punishment was a sort of tit-for-tat, a retribution, a measure for measure. That it was inflicted for the sake of society and for the sake of the offender was only gradually discerned. Men punished one another long before they understood the true reasons and justifications of punishment. Punishment was a sort of *revenge*, only differing from what we now call revenge in the very important respect that those who inflicted the punishment were *not*, after a certain progress had been made in social organisation, those who had themselves suffered the wrong. Yet as the sin was (rightly enough) supposed to have been committed

[1] I might have added that another proper object of punishment by man is that such punishment should be exemplary, *i.e.* to prevent *others* sinning in the same way (cf. Deut. xvii. 13). We can hardly ascribe such punishment to God, unless it has *also* some effect upon the punished.

against society as a whole, society delegated to certain persons the duty of "hitting back," of revenging the wrong which it had suffered through the committed sin. So also did men think of God. He too "hit back"; from those who had violated his laws he exacted toll—the toll of punishment.

Moreover, the punishments of God were looked for, not within the sinner, but outside him; we shall soon see with what measure of truth. The rewards of God were looked for, not within the good-doer, but outside him; we shall soon see with what measure of truth.

There was another reason why men had crude ideas about divine punishment over and above their crude ideas of punishment in general. God was not yet thought of as acting by law, and acting always and universally. He acted spasmodically, and interfered from time to time in human affairs. Upon a very good action done on earth he specially arranged that prosperity should follow; upon a very bad action he specially arranged that there should follow calamity. Moreover, from our present point of view, there was also much error as to the nature of "good" and "bad" actions, and God was sometimes thought to reward and punish in ways which to us seem inadequate to, and unworthy of, the Divine Perfection.

Even at a much later stage of human development, outward good fortune, outward trouble and pain, were regarded as the rewards and punishments of God. When good men were harassed by trouble and sorrow, and bad men were cheered by success and prosperity, their fellows marvelled and grew perplexed. Was God asleep? Had the justice of God grown cold? Or were, perchance,

the good who were unhappy and wretched not really good? Were the wicked who were prosperous to suffer in their deaths or in their descendants? This perplexity became even more grievous when the calamity was personal. "Are my sins more weighty than I know? Is my sorrow a punishment for hidden iniquity?" So the troubled spirit of man, in its upward journey towards a fuller truth, sought for enlightenment and for the solution of a great problem.

Life is much more complicated than the early thinkers could realise. It is more interconnected. The miserable effects of one man's sins are shared or even borne by another who is guiltless, and sometimes the highest virtue is shown in bravely bearing the burden of another's iniquity. These truths, obvious to us to-day, were hidden from the eyes of primitive man. Yet his long and agonized clinging to the cherished doctrine that calamity betokened sin, and that prosperity betokened righteousness, was not *wholly* unjustified; still less unjustified was it for those who did not yet believe in the doctrine that another and *better* life awaited the purified soul of man after his earthly death. For there is, and there must ever be, a *certain* connection between righteousness and happiness, and between misery and sin. Only we have always to remember there may be, and there is, a vast amount of unhappiness not in any way due to the fault of those who are unhappy. But none the less the unhappiness even in such cases is often due to the fault of somebody,—to the ignorance, cruelty, obstinacy, or whatever other sin it may be, of *somebody*, though the *somebody* may have nothing to do with, or may be no relative whatever of, the person who

is unhappy. Nor are we content to allow that the connection is purely internal. That righteousness makes for internal happiness, that wickedness makes for internal misery, is not enough. It would be ridiculous and unbearable that righteousness should permanently produce even *external* misery, and that wickedness should permanently produce even *external* prosperity. In the long run there must be *some* connection or alliance between all right forms of prosperity (or well-being or happiness) and righteousness, even as there must be *some* connection or alliance between calamity, misery, and sin. A universe in which righteousness *always* produced external misery would, we feel, not be a universe ruled by a perfectly wise and good God. Nor would reason be satisfied by the establishment of the principle that there is *no* connection between them, or by the establishment of the fact that it is a pure toss-up whether righteousness is followed by misery or prosperity, and whether sin is followed by happiness or sorrow. Our reason and our faith alike forbid us to believe in such a supposed principle or in such a supposed fact.

Happily our observation also. For, in spite of many exceptions, and with due regard paid to what constitutes true happiness and misery even of the external type, it is surely true to say that, *on the whole*, righteousness produces prosperity and happiness, and that wickedness produces calamity and woe. Only it does not follow that the sin of one man will cause *him* calamity. It may cause calamity to *another*. Moreover, human action and character, as I have said, are intensely complicated. There are endless combinations and interconnections of causes and effects, and the law that, on the whole

and in the long run, righteousness tends to "life," and to all the manifestations of life—happiness, prosperity, well-being—and that wickedness tends to death with all its manifestations—misery, suffering, and calamity—often cannot be traced in detail, or in particular incidents, but we must be content to observe it, and welcome it, in larger sweeps of time and in greater combinations of events.

The proverb, "honesty is the best policy," in the sense that it is the policy which leads to prosperity and well-being, is in the long run true, though not necessarily and always for every individual. The adage "righteousness exalts a nation" is true, though not necessarily always and everywhere, for a more wicked nation may conquer and ruin its less wicked neighbour. Trickery and brute force may temporarily prevail over chivalry and the forces of the spirit. But that wickedness brings calamity somewhere, at some time, and to some—this seems a statement of practically universal application. Both individuals and nations have so to grow in goodness and righteousness as to refrain from all such wicked actions of which the calamitous issues would affect rather their neighbours than themselves. They have to learn the fundamental rule of morality: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

We must not, however, press the connection between goodness and prosperity, or between calamity and sin, too closely. I do not merely mean that the individual righteous man may often be miserable not through his own fault, and that the individual sinner may be (to all appearances) outwardly comfortable and prosperous. We must not be troubled by these experiences, or because of them

lose faith in the righteous God. Nor must they make us falter in the cheering belief that, upon the whole and in the long run, righteousness tends to produce external as well as internal happiness, while wickedness tends to produce external as well as internal sorrow and pain. But I also mean this. There is a sense in which it may be a blessing for the righteous to suffer, there is a sense in which it may be a strange and painful punishment for the wicked to be happy and prosperous. Of the righteous a few words will be said presently, but as regards the wicked, may it not be said that their prosperity, if it leads them to continue in their sin and to disbelieve in God, is the most awful and deadly of punishments? Perhaps the prosperity of the wicked should puzzle us, not in the way in which it puzzled Job, but in the sense that it may harden the evil-doers in sin. God, we are now inclined to say, should send suffering to the wicked, not in anger but in pity. But a little reflection will induce us to hold our breath and pause. We cannot rightly interpret or understand the calamities and miseries of the world, but this much we do see: that the frequent lack of correspondence, as regards individuals, between character and happiness, or between character and misfortune, tends to the independence and purity of goodness; it tends to brace and harden. There is no constant or speedy tit-for-tat; no invariable measure for measure: vice is not always punished; virtue is not always rewarded. A man has to resist vice, to check his evil propensities, even though he finds that he is not constantly being pulled up by outward adversity and pain. He is to feel and cultivate the pricks of conscience. He is not to trust, as a child might

trust, to the whips of adversity, to the reproofs of external sorrow or external pain. He is big enough, or must learn to be big enough, to dispense with a regular correspondence of the inward and the outward. The exceptions should serve to make him depend more upon himself, or if we may also put it so, to depend more upon God.

Similar reflections occur to us as regards the righteous. If the good suffer, we may say that this suffering tends to make goodness more independent. It helps us to care for goodness for its own sake, to love it, and to love its Source, for themselves and only for themselves. But there is something more. Suffering brings out and develops character. It supplies a field for all sorts of virtues, for resignation, faith, courage, resource, endurance. It stimulates; it purifies. This is an old and familiar and never-to-be-forgotten truth. "The chastisements of love," of which the old Rabbis spoke, are very real. The discipline of sorrow, the purification of adversity: preachers often preach about these, and they are right. How often we notice sorrows coming to one person which are due to another's sin. Thus we find instances of sin becoming the opportunity of good, as when, for example, the irritability of one person is an exercise for the forbearance and good temper of another. So closely interrelated are human actions and their effects. And in this interrelation may be many a blessing. For the beauty of one man's dealings with another, who does not "deserve" it, may result in the change of that other's whole character and disposition. Sweet temper in one man may cure irritability in another. On few heads will coals of fire be heaped without some good accruing to the recipient of such bountiful

forgiveness and love. Again, the effects of the sin of one man may voluntarily be borne by another: the sin evokes deliberate self-sacrifice, leading to the highest possible development of character. One person may be wasteful, but another (perchance, his wife) may bear the results of his waste, and prevent him suffering from it. And the wife's wise and gentle endurance may finally overcome her husband's sinfulness. His better nature may be aroused; through *her* goodness, *he* may become good. "Men still count that life the highest," said a great teacher, "which is a conscious voluntary sacrifice." In one sense she was perfectly right. For in these lives of conscious voluntary sacrifice, human pity, human love and human fortitude, have risen to their highest levels. And often they have not failed to produce their effect. What the prophet wrote of Israel in relation to the rest of the world is constantly true of individuals: "*He* was wounded because of *our* transgressions; *he* was bruised because of *our* iniquities; the chastisement which brought *our* peace was laid upon *him*, and through *his* stripes *we* have been healed." So great is the sweet power of human righteousness and of human love: so clearly do they point to their immortal source and guarantee.

The reward of virtue may be misery, and yet this may be the highest reward, for it may lead to virtue becoming still more virtuous. The punishment of sin may be prosperity, and yet this may be the highest punishment, for it may lead to sin becoming still more sinful.

God *does* punish and reward in various ways, though perhaps it might be better to say: he *educates*, he disciplines. And perhaps it is inevitable that the

discipline, which is to strengthen and purify some, must, for a time, be a stumbling-block to others. For how else could the freedom of virtue be secured? We have to call in another life to amend the failures of this life. Again and again we seem to demand and require immortality for our sinners as much as we pray and hope for it for our saints.

God educates alike through prosperity and adversity; both may bring blessings and opportunities, and both may bring dangers and difficulties. But neither the one nor the other is a *mere* reward or a *mere* punishment. We have, in truth, to make an almost clean sweep of the old primitive ideas about reward and punishment. God's rewards are neither sweetmeats nor bribes; his punishments may be deterrents, but they are, at all events, not deterrents for the coward, nor are they the whippings of anger, sent to hurt, but not to purify.

The rewards and punishments of God may be said to reside in the inevitable and inherent results of both goodness and sin. These results may be both external and internal. The external results may affect the doer, and his family, or outsiders, or all three of them at once. The internal results are those which only affect the doer. By the law of habit every good deed makes the character better, and every bad deed (or even thought) makes it worse. In a deep sense was the Rabbinic adage intended: "The reward of a command is a command, the reward of a sin is a sin." The more virtue you do, the more you *will* do and *can* do. The more sin you do, the more you *will* do and *can* do. Happily this stern, but salutary, law is broken in upon by other laws: by the law of repentance, by the law of divine forgiveness. Nevertheless, within its

limits it holds in its grim severity and awfulness, and none can neglect it or infringe it with impunity. The more we yield to temptation, the stronger will temptation become, the less power we shall have to resist it. The *more* good we do, and the *better* we become, the *easier* will it be for us to do and to become good. The best man, be it remembered, is not (as some by an easily explicable fallacy suppose) he who does indeed the right thing, but does it after a sore struggle with temptation, or who does it with great difficulty and reluctance; the best man is rather he to whom now temptation *least* appeals, and who now does the right thing with the *least* effort.[1]

We have a sort of idea that we ought to *praise* most the man who has the fiercest struggle: perhaps so. But that sort of praise is the praise given to the imperfect. Look at the highest: look at God. That sort of praise we do not dream of giving to *him*. He is perfectly good without any struggle at all. The more we become like him, the more effortless will become our virtue.

So too with wickedness. Just as the highest goodness is the goodness done with ease, so the lowest wickedness is the wickedness done with ease, that is, with least hesitation, scruple or resistance. The *habit* of goodness produces good actions easily done, the habit of wickedness produces bad actions easily done.

[1] It must, however, be remembered that human virtue is never without its element of struggle. As I have pointed out already, the ideal is, and always must be, beyond the attainment. As a critic writes: "To be always trying to do something which is just a little too hard for us is the law of progress in all human endeavours. It applies to the artist, the writer, the inventor, the boy and girl at their studies, to all men and women in their moral and spiritual experiences. The law of progress is a law of struggle: not merely to keep where you are, but to advance beyond the point arrived at."

Yet, mercifully, we remember that God helps us to be good; he does not help us to be bad. An outside power as well as an inside power helps us to goodness; no outside power helps us to sin. God aids us to become better; he does not aid us to become worse.

Moreover, the proverb, "It is never too late to mend," expresses a truth. Though the more we yield to temptation, and the less we make effort in well-doing, the worse we become, yet there ever remains a margin of will. We *can* pull ourselves up; recovery is *not* impossible. Recovery *is* possible, on the one hand, through human contrition and repentance; on the other hand, by the operation of the divine spirit. Our religion lays great stress upon this point. We do not know *how* God acts upon man: we do not know what are the *laws* by which he acts upon man. But we have the inspiring faith that his spirit is both within and without us. If it were not within, it could not act from without; if it were not without, it could not be, and act, within. We do not know the sequences; the relations of human and divine are too subtle for us; they escape our ken. But it is a cardinal dogma of our religion that in the "return" of the sinner from wickedness to virtue there are *two* distinct factors, both real, both efficient: the human repentance, the divine grace. Man's work and God's work both contribute to the result.

We pray to God for strength, for help; and no prayer, our religion teaches, is more true and justifiable than this prayer. We pray for and seek reconciliation and atonement; that is, we strive by prayer, by repentance, by contrition, to do all that lies in our power to enable the divine spirit to act

upon our human wills and hearts. Man must do his part for God to do his part; and God must do his part for man to do his part. We separate in time what, in all probability, is concurrent and continuous. The two processes, if such a word may be used, are what the prophet really means when in one breath he urges the Israelites to *make* them a new heart, and in the next breath declares that God will *give* them one. For the truth is twofold. Man makes; God gives.

As it is in this sense that we pray for atonement —for harmony and reconciliation with God—so it is in this sense that we pray for pardon. We do not ask God to let us off the external results of our sins. The law that sin has its external effects, even as righteousness has its external effects, is a divine law. To ask for the cancelment and violation of a law of God seems almost absurd. Far, moreover, be it from us in cringing cowardice to ask that any pain which would make us better—any educative punishment (and God knows no other)—may not befall us. But we *may* ask God—through our repentance and his own grace—to forgive us our sins in the sense of helping us to conquer them. We *may* ask him to turn our punishments into means by which we shall realise our sinfulness, and into instruments by which we may be raised again into virtue. We *may* ask him to let us once more be at peace with our own conscience and with him. This conquest may be a slow conquest, or it may be a sudden conquest; in either case it is won through the help of God. As the old Rabbi said: "There are some who with difficulty win their way to the kingdom of God in a lifetime; there are others who attain it in an hour."

CHAPTER XI

OF PROGRESS AND OF THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

The subjects which are treated in this chapter can only be lightly touched upon to children. But they are, it is needless to observe, of immense importance in themselves. Moreover, the idea of progress is one which, in suitable form, can be made attractive and valuable to children at a comparatively early age. It is helpful and stimulating, as well as comforting and consoling, to believe (as our religion teaches us to believe) that God is helping mankind to know him better and to become in the aggregate wiser and more good. The problems which such a belief may raise can be left over for later discussion.

Again, it is also, I think, of importance to speak to children of fifteen and sixteen at latest about the relation of this life to the life eternal. We must neither over-estimate our earthly life nor under-estimate it. We must neither over-estimate the value of "happiness" nor under-estimate it. Modern Jewish teaching, on account of its opposition to Christianity and to an often false conception of Christian teaching, is inclined rather to over-estimate than to under-estimate. It is important to keep the balance even: to weigh carefully, and to bring out fully, the great truth of both portions of the supreme and inspired utterance of a Jewish Rabbi of the second

century, which I have quoted in the text. This life is not a "vale of tears," and yet this life is a preparation for another.

God is the Ruler. We believe that the history of mankind has been in some sense the product of his will. We find it hard to combine human liberty (the need for which we see) with divine control; we find it still harder to combine the divine rule with the facts of evil, so manifold and so terrible. And yet we cannot believe that the history of mankind is independent of God and of his will. If God there be, such dissociation of human history from him seems still more inconceivable and more difficult than his rule together with liberty and with evil. If this divine rule exists, we are driven on to the further belief that there must be some explanation of, and some meaning in, the evil. There must be some explanation of human sin, human ignorance, human suffering; some explanation of the appalling cruelties and abominations which men have practised upon one another, as well as of the awful cruelties which they have practised upon animals. Must there not be a purpose in human history? Why has man developed from animal origins, and why did a period of primitive savagery last for thousands of years? We cannot tell. The full explanation is known only to God. But imperfect as men are even to-day, imperfect as they are even in countries where civilisation is highest, no one can dispute the fact that we are, at all events, wiser, and even better, than our distant and savage ancestors. We are, at all events, better in the sense that our conceptions of righteousness and love are higher and fuller than theirs. The hope has, therefore, been formed that

as we are superior to our remote ancestors, so may our remote descendants be superior to us. We hope that the rule of God may mean that man is very gradually, and in spite of many set backs, becoming, upon the whole, better, not worse; wiser, and not more ignorant. We also hope that the mass of human suffering is to become not greater but less. We hope this, and we believe this. It is a part of our religion. We cannot, indeed, say that there is any man in England to-day who is wiser and better than *any* man who lived on this earth two hundred or even two thousand years ago, but we may believe that the total of our moral and religious ideas, and the concrete embodiment of our moral and religious ideas in our customs, manners, laws and institutions, are better and more developed than they were two or five or eight hundred years ago. We may believe that the aggregate of wisdom and righteousness in the world is larger now than it was five hundred or five thousand years ago, and that, in such a sense as this, there has been progress, and that there will be progress. We may believe that it is the divine will that man is gradually to attain to that measure of "perfection which is natural" to him, that is, that human nature is to be perfected as far as human nature upon earth can.[1] We labour for the improvement of society; for the increase of knowledge and the diminution of ignorance; for the increase of righteousness and for the diminution of sin; for the increase of happiness and for the diminution of suffering. And we would fain believe that, in so labouring, we are working with God and not without, and still less not against, him; that "we are fellow-workers with God in

[1] Inge: *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 176.

realising his purposes in time."[1] We cannot, indeed, hold this belief without difficulty. It is clouded by a doubt. For, first of all, there is no law of progress, and not only are the set backs grievous and many, but the very idea of progress itself has to be most cautiously interpreted, and the sense in which we are better than our fathers, or in which we may hope that our children may become better than we, has to be most carefully defined. And, in the second place, as we are told that "there can be no doubt about the fate of our planet, and that man and all his achievements will one day be obliterated like a child's sand-castle when the next tide comes in," for "the fate of every globe must be, sooner or later, to become cold and dead like the moon," it is clear that there must be a limit to progress, and it is possible that, in the gradual process by which the earth becomes colder and more cold, mankind may conceivably revert again to primitive conditions. Yet one may trust that, somehow or other, God may spare us this descent and reversion. One can imagine more ways than one in which the descent to savagery and death might be avoided. Meanwhile, we need not cease to labour and to trust. We need not cease to believe, in spite of cruel set backs, in the growing goodness of the world in the aggregate, in the purification of righteousness and of religion, in the advance of knowledge, and in the diminution of suffering and ignorance and sin. Nevertheless, the hope of, and the belief in, human progress is not enough for us. It is not enough to satisfy our religious needs, and the yearning and reasonable demands of a faith in a perfect and caring God. The doctrine of human

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 30.

progress must be supplemented and corrected by the doctrine of immortality.

It is not merely because of the teaching of science that the earth must at last become uninhabitable by man that the hope of immortality is so urgent. It is not merely that if there were not another life for man besides the life on earth, the long drama of human history would apparently end in nothingness. There is something more. For the progress of the race is no adequate compensation for the sorrows and the failures, the sufferings and the agonies, the sins and the ignorance, the stunted growths and the painful immaturities, of endless individuals. That there will be a noble average of knowledge and righteousness in the distant future does not make up for and justify the evils and the waste of yesterday and to-day. There must be development for the individual as well as development for the race.

Nevertheless, the idea of human progress, supplemented by the doctrine of personal immortality, may well continue to stimulate our moral and social efforts. That the earth may grow cold, and become uninhabitable, in a million years, will not, even if it were scientifically assured, have any influence upon human affairs, except perhaps in the case of a few solitary thinkers. A man works for his children, and hardly is he affected by the knowledge that they too, like himself, will soon pass away, and that his very family and his name will also, in all probability, soon disappear. So may we work for the future of our Jewish religion or of our English nation even though we may accept the teaching of science, and believe that, as there was a time in the past when no living beings existed upon the earth, so also will such a time inevitably recur.

Moreover, the thought is unsuited for children, and in the religious teaching of the young it may safely be neglected. All these scientific teachings are for the intellect alone, while our belief in God and in his relations to men is, to us who believe, far more than an intellectual theory : it is a faith, a possession of the soul.

I remember seeing the greatest scholar and the most learned man I ever knew not long before he died. He was a little more than seventy years old. He said to me that he had persistently put before himself an ideal of culture. He did not profess that he had reached that ideal. But he did think that he could at last speak of himself as an *educated* man. He had hoped, he said, to have lived some years longer as an *educated man*. The process of education was just completed when the product had to die. He felt it hard. I think, though I am not sure, that he felt it so very hard because he had little or no belief in *personal* immortality. I well remember the profound impression made upon me by the great scholar, upon whose vast learning I looked with awe, as he sat in his arm-chair, and grieved over his approaching death, over the loss of the " educated " years which he had hoped for, and over the impossibility of producing the great book (the life of Scaliger) for which he had prepared so long, and which he was about to write for the delight and admiration of the world.

Was he justified in his regrets (apart from the question of the book) ? Even if we put the belief in immortality for the moment aside, I am not sure that he was. Or, if regrets were inevitable, I am not sure that the regrets should have come so near to complaints. For to *have attained* is perhaps in-

dependent of the *length* of time which attainment endures. And so, of humanity at large. If we can conceive the goal reached, if we can conceive a humanity as good and wise as it is possible to be, whether it lasted at that stage two years or two thousand, would not, in one big sense, much matter. The goal would have been attained; the race would have been won. The earth might then be suddenly destroyed. But it may indeed be that just because perfection is the exclusive possession of God, man can *never* reach the goal. He can draw nearer and nearer to the goal; he can never attain to it. If, which is impossible, the race were won, there would be no satisfaction. For it would be no triumph for humanity to remain inert at any winning-post. Each goal is the starting-point of a new race. If humanity became as good and wise as possible, it would begin to expand its notion of the *possible*.

Why I have brooded so long on these intractable problems is partly because the Jewish religion has for long maintained with great persistency and emphasis the doctrine of the Kingdom of God on earth. This Kingdom of God may also be called the Golden Age, or, loosely and not very accurately, the Messianic Era. What our ancestors meant by the Kingdom of God was, however, very different from the modern conception of a gradual and indefinitely long progress. Such a conception was unknown to them. In the Hebrew Bible we find the doctrine of a happy future for the Jewish people assuming a variety of forms. In some of these forms it is connected with the figure of a king of the old Davidic line, who would restore the ancient monarchy, and would make the kingdom great, prosperous and independent. With these external blessings spiritual

blisses were conjoined. This King (known as the Messiah, the English version of the Hebrew Mashiach or Anointed) would be very righteous himself, and would inaugurate an era of righteousness. Fighting might come first, but peace would follow. In other forms of the prediction no king is specifically mentioned: only peace and righteousness and external prosperity. Sometimes emphasis is laid upon the overthrow, and even the extermination, of Israel's enemies; in others upon the conversion of the nations to the knowledge and worship of the true God. It is implied that this happy state of affairs is to continue indefinitely; as to whether there is to be no sin and no death the statements vary. In one famous and very late passage there is an allusion to the destruction of death; in others there are allusions to the universal knowledge of God which shall then prevail; in yet others, sin and death would seem not to be supposed to have entirely disappeared. Some of the sayings in which these various hopes and predictions have been embodied have remained cherished possessions among us to this day. We glory in them and are comforted by them. The establishment of a world peace, the conversion of the nations, the writing of the Law upon the heart,—such ideals are our ideals too, and the ideals affect our lives.

In the Hebrew Bible the doctrine of the Kingdom of God and the Messianic Era is limited to earth: except in two instances there is no allusion to any resurrection. But in the century before the Christian era the new doctrines of the resurrection and of immortality became widely accepted, and these doctrines naturally exercised the greatest influence upon the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. The

belief in a future life did not, however, by any means destroy the belief in a Golden Age upon earth. But it produced a curious mixture of ideas, and a considerable confusion. The earthly Golden Age was sometimes conceived as an age of a transfigured earth, a new earth which was itself half heavenly and supernatural. Upon this new earth the righteous dead would rise to enjoy the happiness which they had deserved, but which had been denied to them in their earlier existence. This Golden Age or Messianic Era would in its turn not last for ever, but would also pass away; the righteous would, however, continue to exist everlastingly in more spiritual conditions in heaven. The wicked would be annihilated or kept for ever in hell, but many would be purged of their sin by the punishments that they received, and be then allowed to enjoy the everlasting beatitude of the good. These various ideas assumed a number of fantastic shapes and forms. They were combined together in all sorts of ways.

We can neglect them all. We can, that is, neglect everything except the fundamental hopes which lie at the root of them: the hope, that is, first of a better earth, of a wider knowledge of God, of a more extended righteousness, of a more permanent peace, and, secondly, the hope of a life beyond the grave: the hope of the Kingdom of God; the hope of Immortality. The figure of the Messianic King, the dream of a Judaic kingdom, have disappeared. Disappeared too is any idea of vengeance upon Israel's foes. And as for the lot of man beyond the grave, the idea of hell has happily vanished. The hope is equal and universal. Be it by long and slow stages and discipline, yet even the

wicked shall be brought to righteousness and the knowledge of God.

In spite of all its many difficulties, Judaism cannot, I think, dispense with the idea of the Kingdom of God upon earth, or with the hope of progress. "May thy kingdom come" is a prayer common both to the synagogue and the church. And Judaism, while not by any means neglectful of the individual, is yet deeply interested in society. The ultimate hope and stimulus, on which all labour for social justice and social amelioration rests, are the hope and stimulus of progress and of the Kingdom of God. "The upward struggle in which morality lives has no finality; an achieved good always points the way to a possible better." And this is true both as regards the struggle for our own individual betterment, and as regards the struggle for the betterment of society. "The unrealised ideal—the ideal which we hope to see realised some day—is always before the gaze of the moral will, which sees in the prospect of a better future a vision of its completed task."[1] And this ideal and this vision are, I think, operative in the social sphere—in the concrete morality of society—as well as in the life of the individual. Judaism may and should, justifiably as it seems to me, cling to the hope and the belief that mankind as a whole, in spite of set backs, is yet advancing to a better and purer knowledge of God and his laws, and to a fuller application of the ideals of righteousness and love. The ideal of the Messianic Era or the Kingdom of God is an ideal, or even a doctrine, which Judaism cannot relinquish, and which, with whatever changes of form and of manner, it must still continue to cherish and to teach.

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 29.

We look upon our life on earth in two ways. First, it is an end in itself ; secondly, it is a discipline and a preparation. It is an end in itself in two ways, first as regards ourselves, secondly as regards our successors. We have to work for those who come after us. We have to sow that they may reap. We have to be faithful and suffer that they, and the world at large, may know and prosper and enjoy. This idea will meet us again when we speak of the "Mission of Israel." But neither there nor here have I space to enlarge upon it properly. "That long space of time when I shall no longer be," said Cicero, "moves me more than these few moments." The Jew should say so and feel so more earnestly than any other man.

But our life on earth is also an end for ourselves. If we can imagine a caterpillar, a chrysalis and a butterfly, all endowed with human thought and will and feeling, we might say that the life of the caterpillar is both an end in itself and a preparation. Our life here, with all its limitations and imperfections, has its own joys, its own glories, which are wholly peculiar to it. There is an immensity of meaning in the saying of Rabbi Jacob, which I am never weary of quoting : "Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come ; and better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the world to come than the whole life of this world."

God has, perhaps, given to every stage (and of how many "stages" our immortal life is to consist none knows) something special and peculiar. He has certainly given that something to our life on earth. The satisfaction which comes from right-doing, the joy of beauty, of love, of knowledge, of

sacrifice, are not less real because they are transitory. They are *ends*, however much they may prepare us for something unknown and beyond which may be better than they. They are *real*, however much many of them must be peculiar to beings formed of flesh and spirit, peculiar, that is, to our life upon earth. Our religion holds rather strongly to this view that earthly life is not a *mere* preparation, that it has its own value, and is intended to have its own joy. It is not a *mere* preparation for another life of the individual, any more than it is a *mere* preparation for the better lives of our descendants. It has (or should have) its own value, its own justification, its own enjoyment.

Nevertheless it is *also* a preparation, it is *also* a discipline, and unless we regard it *also* as a preparation and a discipline we shall not regard or value it aright; it will not have attained its true meaning and its full solemnity. "Prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the hall," as the same Rabbi said. The conception of the Kingdom of God upon earth is inadequate without the idea of personal immortality. For what (as we have already asked) of the endless broken and stunted lives, what of the endless sorrows and tears, which went, and will still have to go, to the approach towards that Kingdom? What of human sin not changed by God's forgiveness and man's effort into human goodness? These, as we have seen, are not made endurable, and are not explained, by any theory of the future Kingdom. Sin and ignorance must work themselves out; enlightenment (both moral and intellectual), with whatever pain and slowness, must come to the savage, to the idiot, and to the wicked.

Nor can the ordinary arguments for immortality be ignored. I am not thinking of "rewards," still less of "punishments." The sacrifice, however agonizing, which was made for truth, for goodness, for the sake of another's happiness and well-being, is its own end. But thought and feeling revolt at the idea that, if there is another life for the bad, there is not also another life for the good. If the one is to find enlightenment, the other must find advancement. If the one is, at last, to know God, the other must continue his knowledge and increase it. Thus, from every point of view, the hope of immortality becomes a common one for all. For good and bad, wise and ignorant, savage and civilised, this life cannot be the end.

The "divine image" is another familiar argument for immortality. If we "carry" within us a "spark" of the divine "fire," the "spark" which comes from an eternal source is deathless like its origin. And the individuality which it helped to fashion, of which it was the essential part, may also continue and persist. Some persons feel that the very power to love, with all the height to which human love has risen, would seem a mockery if it were limited to our earthly life. Others, again, are moved by the immensely wide range of the conviction, in one form or another, that the "soul" is immortal. Human instinct—the feeling of some of the wisest and the best of men—seems to point in the same direction. This feeling is an "intuitive perception," as some would say, of the great truth, and the good God cannot have allowed us to be so utterly and cruelly deceived.

Lastly, we will not ignore or reject the simplest reason of all. Those who sow in sorrow shall at

last reap in joy. Nothing else will fully satisfy our conception of the righteous and loving God. Because he cares, he will comfort; the ocean of tears shall at last be dried, and the cry of sorrow shall at last be stilled.

NOTE

In a deeply interesting, informing and valuable article by Mr. Julian Huxley in the *Hibbert Journal* for April 1923, on "Progress: Biological and Other," the writer observes: "In every time and every country men have obscurely felt that, although so much of the world, taken singly, was evil, yet the clash of thing with thing, process with process, the working of the whole, somehow led to good. This feeling is what I believe is clarified and put on a firm intellectual footing by biology. The problems of evil, of pain, of strife, of death, of insufficiency and imperfection—all these and a host of others remain to perplex and burden us. But the fact of progress emerging from pain and battle and imperfection—this is an intellectual prop which can support the distressed and questioning mind, and be incorporated into the theology of the future." (1923.)

CHAPTER XII

THE MISSION OF ISRAEL

This chapter needs no introduction or apology. I have tried to put forward my own "Liberal-Jewish" conception of the "Mission," and I have also tried neither to exaggerate nor to whittle down. The divine character of the mission, if it be believed in, must be stated clearly and whole-heartedly: on the other hand, one must not exaggerate its scope or its effects. I have also tried not to shirk or ignore the difficulties which the very conception of the mission brings with it in its train. These difficulties, however, are not to be placed before young children. I have put my whole thought upon the subject before parents and teachers: it will be for them to use (and adapt) so much or so little of what I have said as in their judgement may be suitable and desirable for the child.

God is the Ruler, God is the Father, of man. We believe that he watches over us as individuals; we believe that he watches over the human race as a whole. So we are fain to believe that God will bring his children and his subjects nearer and more near unto himself. This belief implies, as we have seen, the doctrine of the Future Life upon the one hand, the doctrine of progress or of the Golden Age upon the other hand.

God reveals himself in human history. He is not merely the father of individuals; he is also the father of the race. Human history on earth, apart from the ultimate destinies of individuals beyond the grave, concerns the divine Father. The phrase "God in history" is not a mere string of words without a meaning. I mentioned in an earlier chapter that, in the course of human progress and as instruments of it, various races seem to have been entrusted by God with various duties or missions. Many races and nations have not, so far as we can discern, had much influence upon the world's progress, but some of them have exercised such influence, though not necessarily with their own knowledge and intention.

In the domain and sphere of righteousness and religion, we hold that the Jewish race has exercised such influence, and exercised it by the will and purpose of God. We further hold that the Jewish race or community has not exhausted that influence, but that part of its work lies still before it. It may at once be admitted that there are many lands and races among which Jewish influence has not spread in the past, and where there seems small reason to believe that it will operate in the future, but an influence can be large and important without being universal. Influence may also be exerted indirectly.

The Jews then, as we believe—and it is a cardinal doctrine of our religion—have been chosen by God to exercise in divers ways, directly or indirectly, an important influence upon a great section of humanity. This influence we believe to lie in the direction of a gradual diffusion of those doctrines about God and righteousness, and about the relation

of man to God and of God to man, some of which I am attempting (very roughly) to set forth in this book.

God chose the Jews: they are a chosen people, though not a people (as I hold and as I shall subsequently maintain) in the sense that the English or the Serbians are a people, but rather a religious brotherhood, a "kingdom of priests." A chosen people, not chosen for themselves, but for others.

I said in an earlier chapter that in the development of religion God does not work in the simple way in which we might at first expect that he would work. "His ways are not our ways." There is much in the vocation of Israel, and in the method of it, which we may find hard to understand. But the *fact* stands out to our minds and hearts clear and sure. We maintain it, and we cherish it. The history of the Jews and of their mission must be interpreted in the light of the still more fundamental doctrine of the perfect goodness and truth of God. It must be interpreted in the light of the doctrine that, in the history of man, human and divine elements are strangely and wonderfully intermixed and interwoven.

A chosen people, not chosen for themselves, but for others. A chosen people, but not chosen in order to acquire prosperity, or power, or numbers; not chosen for the sake of art, or science, or philosophy, but chosen to learn, and to help in diffusing, true doctrine and true experience about God and righteousness and the relation of man to God and of God to man.

A chosen people: a consecrated brotherhood. A brotherhood consecrated to an end; a people to be purged and purified by sorrow and suffering towards

the carrying out of an end which many of themselves are still unable to realise.

A chosen people: a consecrated brotherhood; chosen to gather in experience and to treasure it up, to transmit and to diffuse it. For religious knowledge is, in one sense, unlike other knowledge. It is far more intimately connected with the lives and souls of those who know it. It is not therefore merely knowledge. *It is an experience.* What do I mean by an experience? I mean quite simply that religion is something which is felt and lived. Thus men experience sorrow or joy: in another sense they experience self-sacrifice or courage. Religion is *in* the man; it is not outside him, though it depends upon that which is not only within him, but also outside him. Religious knowledge is an internal conviction attained by processes of thought and incomings or inrushes of feelings, which are not learnt from a book, but are acquired in life. Man's total experience includes his religious experience. A knowledge of human nature cannot be acquired from books, though books may help us to acquire it. It cannot be acquired from other men's lives, though these (and the record of them) may suggest and confirm a man's personal knowledge. That knowledge itself must be won by experience. And so of religious knowledge. It, too, must be won by a man's own efforts, his own progress, his own feelings, his own spiritual travail—in a word, his own experience.

Thus religious knowledge cannot be fully put down and expressed in books. It cannot be wholly put down and expressed in formulæ and doctrines. It is, I must repeat, an experience; it is a life. Suppose a people were chosen to diffuse the know-

ledge of arithmetic. I can conceive that *their* knowledge could be fully expressed in a book, and that, if this book were given to the world, there would be nothing more for the people to do. But religious knowledge is not the same as arithmetic. You cannot put it in a book in the same way. Its formulæ and doctrines are not merely to be learned and accepted by the understanding; they have to be lived and experienced by the whole personality, of which the understanding is only a part. They have to be proved to work by experience. Their truth has to be realised in life as well as to be accepted by the reason. Thus religion, as embodied in a person, and shown forth in that person's conduct and *personality*, is often more powerful to impress and to convince than religion as expressed in a book; holy men will often help a religion more than a learned treatise.

If a people be "chosen" for the sake of religion, it must, I take it, be so chosen, not merely to diffuse knowledge through a book or through the inculcation of doctrines, but it must be chosen to diffuse *experience*. Only spiritual persons can fully make known spiritual truth. The Jews can only *become* a holy nation by leading holy lives: the measure of their holiness is not the assertion of the vocation, with which they may believe themselves to have been entrusted, but the lives which they lead, the characters which they are. The possibility of carrying out their special "calling" depends upon environment and outside circumstances, on the one hand, upon their own faith and characters, on the other hand. Religion is not mere knowledge; it is *experience*. Therefore it is not those who are merely wise who can teach it: but only they who

both know and have experienced. Religion is not mere belief; it is *life*. It is not merely the believers who can teach: but only they who believe their religion and have *also* lived it.

I emphasise and reiterate that religion is an *experience*, and I do so all the more because one of my critics has objected to the term. He thinks it is "philosophical." But, with all respect, I think he is wrong. It is, however, a fact that the use of the term "experience" is comparatively unfamiliar to Jews. No Christian would dream of objecting to the word on the ground that it was "technical," "philosophical," or "hard." And we who are of the Jewish faith must not be afraid of the word, and must learn to use it, and to realise its meaning, in this particular application. How can a man talk about the divine love unless he thinks he has experienced it? How can you talk to any purpose about the warmth of the sunshine if you have never felt it? I think that even with such a doctrine as the Unity of God, it must not be regarded as a mere intellectual proposition, but it, too—in order to become a part of our religion—must be experienced. The conviction of the Unity, and of those implications of the Unity upon which I have already laid stress, must become an actual experience of the soul. One God in sorrow and in joy: one God who rules and cares: one God whose justice is love and whose love is justice,—this conviction can be, through prayer and communion, a veritable experience. Let us not then cavil at or neglect the word experience: still less let us neglect that essence of religion which the word expresses and implies.[1]

[1] What other word can so well express the living faith of the Psalmists? It is our conviction that their faith was *experienced* which makes it so appealing to us.

A chosen people is not necessarily a perfect people even in that for which they were chosen! Would that we, the Jewish brotherhood, were better and holier than we are! But because we fall far short of acting up and living up to the heights and ideals of our calling, we may none the less believe in it. And our duty remains clear,—the duty of living, to the utmost of our powers, each one of us, the best and most religious life we can conceive or realise. The life which we must seek to live is, in its rounded perfection, beyond us all, but in its beginnings it is within the capacity of us all; it is the life of righteousness lived in the realised presence of God.

A chosen people: a consecrated brotherhood. Chosen for others, and not for ourselves. But if chosen for others, chosen with a certain end and purpose: hence, we may equally well say, invested with a special mission, a peculiar calling.

Is this belief of ours shared by anybody outside our own brotherhood? Or is it denied by all men except ourselves? As regards the last two questions we may say roughly that very many persons who are not Jews believe in the divine election and mission of the Jewish race up till the Christian era, but most of them hold that the special purposes of God, so far as the world at large is concerned, were fulfilled and closed when Judaism gave birth to Christianity: after that there was nothing, there is nothing, and there will be nothing, more for the Jews to do. That the Jews have any religious work still to do is a doctrine largely limited to the Jews themselves, and I fully admit that it is a daring thing to hold to a doctrine which is rejected by a very large majority of the civilised world. Still, we must not be frightened at being in a minority. We

may, in the long run, find the truth we champion more and more generally acknowledged.

Why do we still believe in the continuing and unaccomplished mission? For several reasons. Mainly, I think, because our religion and our religious experience have not yet become the religion and the religious experience of mankind, and we possess the faith that *in their essentials* they are destined to become so. If it be said: "Even if your religion is to become in its essentials the religion of mankind, what are you doing, and what do you expect to do, towards the diffusion of it?"—then I would answer: "I am not *sure* that we are doing nothing now; still less am I sure that we shall do nothing in the future. They too may serve their mission who, even for long stretches of time (and to our Master a thousand years are as a day), only stand, and suffer, and wait."

We believe, moreover, in our mission because of our history and because of the general history of mankind. We hold that the preservation of the Jewish race from A.D. 30 to A.D. 1912 was not due to chance, and that it has not been effected without the will and intention of God. We venture, in all humility, to suppose that the purpose of this preservation is religious; that is to say, we hold that the preservation of our race and brotherhood has some religious object. In other words, the religious work which the Jewish brotherhood has to do for the world did not cease at the birth of Christianity. For my part, I share these opinions. That Christianity was intended by God to play a great religious part in the world, I firmly believe; but I also believe that its appearance in the world did not betoken the end of Judaism as a religion of value. Christianity itself seems to Jews only a stage in the preparation of the

world for a purified, developed and universalised Judaism.

It is with religions as with persons. It may be that one man may possess some charm or excellence in a greater or more winning degree than another, but the second may, nevertheless, have the deeper and the grander character. God does not choose to send all his light through one window. I am not concerned (as some Jews are) to prove that Christianity has never presented *any* aspect of religious or moral truth more forcibly than Judaism ; and that from no Christian book, teacher or experience has Judaism ever had, or has it now, anything of truth and value to gather. I do not seek to prove such a statement, for I believe it to be untenable. No religion has ever reached perfection: and in the process of its development it can gather in from outside its own borders, elements of truth, which are consistent, and harmonise, with its own thus far attained truths. It can assimilate such new elements of truth. I would not, for instance, venture to assert that Judaism has *nothing* to learn or assimilate from either Christianity or Buddhism. But nevertheless I hold, like all other members of my brotherhood, that in its deepest essentials Judaism stands at the head of God's religions in value and in truth. " God's religions." What a strange phrase ! Yet he who would suppose that Christianity and Mahommedanism, for example, are not religions of God's will and purpose, has, to my mind, a false estimate of history, and too partial and limited a view of the relation of the Divine Being to history and to mankind.

In its deepest essentials, then,—in its conception of God and of his unity, of his relation to man

and of man's to him, of the true service of God and of the consecration of life—Judaism, as we believe, stands at the head of God's religions in value and truth, and these deeper essentials have not yet been wholly adopted by the world, or even by that large section of the world with which we, in England, are more immediately concerned. Our special conceptions of God and of his relation to man have, in some respects, still to make their way. They are not yet purely held in their entirety. It is not one antagonist alone against whom Judaism has to contend. There are forms of unbelief far more alien to its teaching than the various forms of Christianity. We need not again ask at this point why God allows imperfect religions and even "irreligions" to exist and continue. At all events, it is possible that it may be God's intention that the removal of these imperfections and untruths should be committed to those who have been vouchsafed fuller knowledge of him and of his truth.

Meanwhile the mere existence of the Jews is not without its value and its influence. A more active period of influence may, perhaps, at no distant period, begin. Already in the United States there is much interchange of pulpits, much mingling of thought. Jews, especially Liberal Jews, are indubitably doing something in that vast country towards the development of religious belief. In the religious ferment which is there going on, they are playing a part.

It may also be that the Jews themselves are still not sufficiently holy in order to influence their neighbours more actively. For it is not merely a question of truths accepted by the understanding. It is a question of experience. Only they who have experienced God can properly testify to him.

Hence the immense necessity for Jews to live a life of holiness. It is one of the odd and painful paradoxes of history, observed already by the Exilic Isaiah, that the Jews as a body are still not adequately sensitive to the obligations which their vocation has cast upon them, and not sufficiently self-dedicated to a religious life *in the sense of a life which has first-hand experience of God.* "Who is blind," said the prophet, "but my servant, who is deaf but the messenger whom I send?"

If, then, we hold that our mission is not yet exhausted, it is because, on the one hand, there is our history with our continued existence; on the other hand, the actual religious condition of the world. We put the two facts together, and we draw the bold inference that the work of Israel is not yet concluded.

These two facts, which we put into relation, confirm our belief about a third. That third is the testimony of the Bible. When we read in the Book of Isaiah that the prophet of the exile declared that the Jews were God's witnesses, chosen for a religious purpose and charged with a religious mission, we believe that he was speaking words which were inspired by God. Or when we read in the Pentateuch of the Jews being described as "a holy nation and a kingdom of priests," we believe that the writer was touched by the Divine Spirit, and that he wrote words of larger and more permanent meaning than his own generation can have realised.

The doctrine of Israel's mission is, we admit, surrounded by peculiar difficulties. It has been a plant of very slow growth, and, instead of setting out to be a universal religion in all its parts, Judaism has rather been in many ways a national religion, and in many respects has so remained unto this day. It is these

national characteristics of Judaism which have led most critics to deny to it the right to call itself universal, and to deny that any influence upon the world without its pale lies within its power and scope.

The conception or feeling of a mission grew up and was developed by slow degrees. We rarely meet with it in the Hebrew Bible, except in some occasional passages such as those of the Exilic Isaiah or of a few isolated Psalms. Moreover, the very election of Israel—the conception or belief that the Jews were a divinely chosen people—was too commonly interpreted, except by a very few, in a national sense. God was Israel's Father, and Israel was God's son. The relationship was intended to promote the Divine glory and Israel's well-being. Not its immediate well-being, but its ultimate well-being. The general idea was that in the golden or Messianic age Israel would rise superior to all its foes. Israel would be especially glorious and happy and virtuous; doubtless there would be a fringe of other peoples who would accept Israel's religious doctrines, and perhaps even be incorporated into Israel, but Israel would come first in divine favour. In the Messianic age it would increase in glory, in numbers, in prosperity. This, at any rate, was the popular view, and there are very many echoes of it in the Biblical and in the Rabbinical literature.

Why did God not enlighten the people more as to the true mission of Israel? Why was the growth of that idea among both teachers and people so very slow? We cannot say. The mills of God grind slowly, and the will of God is carried out by imperfect instruments. But that will *is* carried out in the long run none the less. Such seems to be the case here.

Moreover, it has to be acknowledged that the Jewish doctrines about God and his relation to man were wedded (as I shall have occasion to mention later on) to a ceremonial and a worship which were of a largely national character, and the national character of this worship and ceremonial has endured unto this day. It is the business of Liberal Judaism (of which I have still to speak), on the one hand, to preserve the historic character of the outward embodiment of the religious doctrine, and, on the other hand, to divest it of its purely national character in the sense of its being a worship and a ceremonial exclusively suited and intended for a single nation. For religion, both in doctrine and ceremonial, should be something super-national. It should bind races and nations together, and it should not keep them sundered and apart. It is not sufficient to offer to outsiders excellent doctrines without also offering to them forms and ceremonial. Religion is a whole, and the doctrines need a form. Men cannot do with doctrines (however excellent) alone. They require an historic ceremonial as well. Judaism must offer them both.[1]

Before the rise of Christianity this need was by

[1] Compare what is said in Chapter XIX. as regards religion and nationality. One of my critics who is both a Liberal Jew and a Nationalist (an unusual combination), and who is also what is far better than either, a deeply religious and most holy man, writes: "I feel uncertain about this paragraph. True religious doctrines must ultimately be shared by all men. Truth is universal and not national. But why should not each race preserve its own national ceremonial? Israel, in keeping the Passover, celebrates *Israel's* deliverance from Egypt. Will (or can) the keeping of the Passover ever become general amongst those to whom it is not connected with the same historical associations? Provided there be unity of spirit, diversity of ceremonial need not keep races and nations apart. I conceive the Judaism of the future as becoming conscious of itself as a branch of universal religion. Judaism and Christianity may both persist: the Jew will retain his Passover; the Christian his Easter; but both will be transfigured." The thought in this last sentence seems to me very noble, far-reaching and bold. Another critic writes: "A denationalised Passover—that is, a religious festival arranged for all nations, with all the Jewish national element left out, might be

some minds actually realised, though not very clearly and distinctly. Then Christianity intervened, and became a deliberately universal religion, offering to all races both doctrine and ceremonial, declaring the equality of all races before God so long as its own doctrines and ceremonial were accepted. Beyond the limits of those who accepted them was a large number of human beings who were believed to remain outside the divine favour and grace and to be given over to wrath and perdition. It was a horrible doctrine, a terrible limitation of the boundless and impartial providence of God. But, in truth, the doctrine that all men are dear to God, and are his equal children whatever their religious beliefs, is of modern growth ; while the doctrine that not merely the good, but also the bad, in all nations, are the objects of his care, and that they will ultimately receive enlightenment and salvation, has not even yet been accepted by all the civilised world.

More and more in the modern world Israel is becoming conscious of its religious mission. Many of its best teachers teach and proclaim it, and the doctrine is slowly winning its way to the hearts of all our brotherhood. It will, we may hope and believe, influence Jewish life more fully in the future than it has influenced it in the past. And the wider conviction of the mission, together with the development and growth of Liberal Judaism, and a gradual change in external circumstance, may all work together for the better carrying out and accomplishment of the Jewish mission in many quarters of the civilised

religious in a Theistic sense, but could not be called Jewish. I do not say that a denationalised Judaism could not be brought into being, but it could not rightly be called Judaism." I am by no means sure. It is very rash to predict what cannot and may not be called Judaism. And of the Pentateuchal holy days, one only presents the " national " difficulty. The subject will come up for treatment later on.

world. For it would seem as if Maimonides (who, with other Jewish writers of the Middle Ages, hinted at this idea) was right, and as if Judaism was not, at present, suited to take up missionary effort among the heathen or among the races of the East, whether civilised or uncivilised. Judaism did this kind of work in the later Hellenistic period, but for very many centuries (owing in part, no doubt, to the impotence caused by persecution and in part to the actual prohibitions imposed by various laws) it has not actively undertaken missionary labours. And indeed Judaism appears to have ceased to desire or to be qualified to do missionary work directly. Other agencies, such as Christianity and Mahommedanism, must first bring men nearer to a faith in One God (in the Jewish sense of the word "God"), before Judaism can exercise any influence for good upon their lives and their beliefs.

But the mission of Israel is not overthrown because we recognise limitations to its exercise. It remains. It endures. The word of the prophet, "Ye are my witnesses," is still accepted and believed by us. Sometimes witnesses through silence, sometimes witnesses through speech and teaching, at all times witnesses by our lives and experience,—we have to remain true to what we believe to be the ordinance and will of God. It is admitted that religion must, as it were, begin "at home." The Jew must first himself know, and act up to, his Judaism. But we cannot also forget that what Israel has to teach has not yet been generally accepted; it still remains, therefore, Israel's duty to experience and to teach it. The more fully he experiences it, the more ardently will he desire to teach it.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION — HOW FAR AND IN WHAT SENSE ARE THE PROPHETS AND THE LAW INSPIRED?

This chapter is, perhaps, for many persons, one of the most necessary and important. For it is much easier to many "liberally" minded parents and teachers to speak of God and of our duties toward him than to speak of inspiration and the Bible. For here all the difficulties, which now confront us, come in. I have sought, at the risk of being a little wearisome, not to overlook or to minimise these difficulties. In language as clear as I could make it, I have tried to make my own view of inspiration plain, and I have then tried to apply it to the Prophets and to the Law. I hope that in doing all this, no trace will be found of anything which (as regards the Bible) savours either of irreverence on the one hand, or of patronising upon the other. If such traces exist, they are wholly unintentional, and against my own deepest convictions and feelings. I would warn teachers and parents, moreover, to put my doctrine of the "true test" of inspiration before their children with the utmost caution and care. It is the wise and good in each generation to whom, as we may well believe, God speaks most clearly. It is their advice which we shall seek. Our own judgement, especially the judgement of young people, may often be at fault. Though reason

and conscience are the final courts of appeal in right and wrong, true and false, we must seek for all the help which the gathered experience of our forefathers, the counsel and opinions of the wise and the good, can bring to, and provide for, us. Before we decide, we need care and thought, purity of heart, honesty of mind. And such decisions cannot be made very early or very lightly. The responsibility of our endowment, the responsibility of conscience and reason, are very great. These divine gifts must be reverently and anxiously used.

OUR belief in a special religious mission having been entrusted to the Jews by God partly depends upon the belief that God has special purposes for particular peoples, and that he enters into special relations with particular individuals. In addition to the reasons given for it in the last chapter, our faith in the "mission of Israel" depends upon our ideas of Revelation and Inspiration, and upon the belief that such revelation and inspiration were granted by God to particular Israelites. The idea of a mission to the world at large hardly existed in Israel as a whole for many ages. It hardly existed before the Babylonian captivity, and hardly existed among the people as a whole for many generations even after that. But it was an element in the doctrine of a few isolated teachers, and doubtless was taken up or pondered over by a few of their disciples. It was notably prominent in the thought of the exilic prophet whose writings are contained in the Book of Isaiah (xl.-lv.). How did this idea occur to him? Of it and of other great ideas we use the terms inspiration and revelation. We say that the idea was revealed to the prophet and teacher by the Divine Spirit; or again, we may say that the prophet or teacher was

inspired by the Divine Spirit so to think and speak and write.

Now, who can pretend to understand accurately the exact relations between God and man? I have no cut-and-dry theories of inspiration and revelation to offer. But we must not believe with any the less intensity in the real and living relation of God to man because we do not fully understand the laws and methods of its operation. This, on the one hand; just as, on the other hand, we must always be true to the facts, and never attempt to make those facts (by ignoring or misinterpreting a part of them) suit our theories or predilections.

It may be that to some persons nothing more is needed than this general doctrine that the Divine Spirit acts upon and influences the human spirit. Such a doctrine we have seen to be a vital principle of our religion. God helps us to be good. God helps us to repent. We ask him to strengthen us. We regard the good we do as specifically ours, but also as specifically his. We usually think of the Divine Spirit in its relation to goodness and religion, but I do not see why we should not also think of it in relation to scientific truth and even to beauty. God is the God of truth, even if it would require explanation and qualification to call him the God of beauty. I do not see why great discoveries may not be regarded as due to his inspiration, and why great poets and thinkers may not ascribe whatever is excellent in their creations as due to God as much as to themselves. Some may argue that we do not need to assume that there is more than one kind of inspiration and more than one kind of revelation. All goodness, all truth, are due to and come from God, who is the inspirer, the revealer and the source.

It does not much matter, as it seems to me, what theory we form of inspiration so long as we maintain the principle and believe in the fact. Even if one form of inspiration, or the inspiration of one man, does not differ from another form of inspiration, or from the inspiration of another man, in kind, these various "inspirations" differ widely from one another in degree. When the degree is very great, it almost seems to amount to a difference in kind. If we take the inspiration of the Hebrew Prophets, for example, and consider the truths which they uttered, the season when they uttered them, the novelty of their utterances, their importance, their influence and their effect, we are, as it seems to me, justified in regarding their inspiration as differing so greatly from the inspiration which comes to you or me, when God helps us to do right, that we may justifiably speak of it as a special sort of inspiration which needs and deserves a heading to itself. Inspired as Amos and Isaiah were, few others (in the department of religion) have ever been.

We do not know the law or method of God's inspiration in the case of ordinary men; we know it none the more in the case of his inspiration of exceptional men, such as the Prophets. In both cases, however, we observe the same fact: the divine does not destroy or overwhelm the human. If it is a question of teaching, for instance, the teaching is always, as a whole, characteristic of the teacher. The divine does not drive out the human. It glows through it. But the human is still there, not merely in the form, but also in the substance. Hence the inevitable mixture in the result. The result is still relative in some measure to the age and place of the speaker. It is still a mixture of eternal and

temporary; of gold and dross. We must neither exaggerate nor cheapen.

Again, we can only say that such and such teaching, or that such and such a writing, is inspired, by our estimate of the actual words, the actual contents. God has put no other test into our hands. When I say "we," I do not mean, however, that the judgement of others, the judgement of our forefathers, the judgement of the civilised world, is to go for nothing, and that "we"—each individual—must begin all over again. All I mean here is that the *test* of inspiration is the *product* of inspiration and its impression upon the human mind. The test of the beauty of a picture is not that it was painted *by* Watts: the test of the beauty of the picture is the picture itself. Nor do we say that because some pictures by Watts are adorably beautiful, therefore everything which he painted must be equally fine. We cannot even say: such and such words of a prophet or teacher seem to us inspired; therefore *all* his words are inspired; or, therefore all his words which *he* thought inspired *were* inspired. The test of inspiration is not what he thought; still less is the test that his writing or words are included in a certain book, which many people have believed to be inspired in all its contents from beginning to end.[1]

The gauge of inspiration can only be the actual contents of the words, together with their effects for goodness and truth: the contents of the words, including their originality, power, beauty, influence,

[1] A critic asks: "Who is to decide what is inspired from the contents?" Not an infallible pope or church, but the careful and progressive judgement of the wisest and best men from age to age must help us to decide for ourselves. *We* can only believe that certain utterances are inspired, because after careful thought and study *we* honestly believe them to be so. The subject is alluded to later on.

and so on. It is not the place where they are found which makes them inspired; it is themselves—their own value, importance, originality, excellence, truth.

There *is* indeed *one* reason why the place where they are found may help to justify us in calling them inspired, and this reason is specially applicable to words found in the Hebrew Bible or in other portions of Jewish literature. That reason is this. We believe that God has special purposes for particular peoples. In the accomplishment and fulfilment of that purpose, which may extend over an indefinite period of time, the words of various teachers may have a place. They may be inspired in relation to the whole scheme, though they may not be inspired in the sense that they are eternally good and true. We may well believe that certain doctrines and laws, which were of value in gradually raising the Jews to a purer faith in God and to a higher conception of morality, are, nevertheless, in themselves by no means perfect or eternally true. This would be a sort of secondary and historic inspiration, which does not seem to me by any means incredible, if we once believe in the twin doctrines that God has special purposes for particular peoples, and that he has relations with individual men. In the same way, repetitions, with slight modifications, of the same fundamental truths we may also regard as inspired, if those repetitions served the turn of religion and of religious truth. Thus we may rightly speak of the Psalter as inspired, even though it may have been written later than the Prophets, and though there be in it few doctrines or thoughts which could not be traced back to, or found in, the writings of those Prophets. A general stream of doctrine, setting

and flowing in one direction,—in the direction, for example, of a more emphatic and purer Monotheism, of a more inward and vivid conception of the relations of God to man,—we may justly regard as inspired, because it fits in with our general view of the purposes of God in the "election" of Israel, or with our general view of Israel's mission as a whole and through the ages. An oft-repeated truth may be inspired every time it is re-enunciated. In this sense, then, a passage in a later teacher may rightly be regarded as inspired, even although the main thought of it occurs also in an earlier teacher. It is inspired as part of the general stream, as a link in a chain, as an indication of a divine purpose.

That there is dross mixed with the ore need not worry and bother us, any more than it need worry and bother us that good men are not free from error and sin, or that imperfection exists in the world at all. The slow growth of humanity is, we have freely admitted, a considerable puzzle; the slow growth of pure religion, the imperfections in the writings of "inspired" teachers, are only a form and instance of it. We do not understand why certain truths in which *we* intensely believe, and which *we* regard as essential portions of Judaism to-day, were not revealed more clearly and more fully to our ancestors. But it is far better to confess our ignorance than, at the expense of strictest truth, to declare that these truths *were* clearly and fully revealed, if the documents do not admit of such a statement, or if such a statement can only be elicited from them by squeezing, by exaggeration, by "reading in," by evasion. It cannot be too often repeated that we have obligations to truth as well as

to righteousness, and that God himself is not more righteousness than he is truth.

In dealing with the results of the divine inspiration as we find it in Jewish literature, whether Biblical or post-Biblical, we observe that inspiration does not move in a straight line. By this I mean that we do not find that as one great teacher follows on another, the second always possesses a little more truth and a little less error than the first. New truth may even bring with it fresh error. Thus, to take a very conspicuous example. The doctrine of blissful immortality was, at one time, a new truth, but it brought with it a new and terrible error, namely, the doctrine of eternal infelicity. This is another puzzle, but we must not allow it to disturb us. We, smaller men and less inspired than our forefathers, yet standing on their shoulders, and profiting by their experience and their words, see a little farther than they, even as we devoutly believe that our great-great-grandchildren, profiting by our experience and words, and standing upon our shoulders, will surely see a little farther than we. Nevertheless, a teacher who lives in one age may, in some things, see *more* clearly, whilst in other things he may see *less* clearly, than another teacher who preceded him. The religion of one age may, as a *whole*, and in *some* things, be truer and purer and better than the religion of a preceding age, yet in *some* things it may be less great. So of a book. In some things, or as a whole, it may be nobler and truer than an earlier book; in some things, less true and less noble.

The greatest men are not allowed, and are not able, to see the *whole* truth. They see portions of it, and of these portions they see some portions

more clearly, others less. God leaves much over for future generations to deepen, to illustrate, to apply, as well as some things, too, for them to discover, or to have revealed to them.

Again, the greatest teachers are, as I have already said, not always at their best; they have their higher and their lower moments; their human passions and prejudices, their divine upliftings and revelations. Comparing small things with great, we may say that we are ourselves like unto them in this: we appreciate and value divine truths better at one time than at another. And so of the greatest teachers: though in some things they see farther than their contemporaries, in others their vision has the same horizon, the same limitations. They may, for instance, profoundly realise some one new great truth, and in the vision and setting forth of that truth their inspiration may specially consist. But they may retain other convictions and opinions on a lower level of religion and morality. They themselves may perceive no contradiction between the new truth and the old opinions. Thus we find in the greatest teachers inconsistencies. They belong to their own age: they belong also to the future.

The very truths which the great teacher has been inspired by God to see may lead him into special errors. He may therefore have, as it were, the defects of his qualities. Thus, for instance, to the Hebrew prophets the great truth came that God is one, and that there is one God only, and that he is a God of righteousness and truth. But they did not so clearly see the full implication of that great and inspired teaching. Hence, some of these great and inspired men usually seem to teach that the one and only God is more the God of Israel—in nearness and

close relation—than he is the God of other nations, and in this way the very quality of their excellent teaching was accompanied by a defect. Nevertheless, if we see the consequences of the One God doctrine more clearly than Jeremiah, Jeremiah was none the less fifty thousand times greater and more inspired than we.

In no book which was ever written can there be nothing but goodness and truth, just as no man has ever lived who said nothing but what was good and true. But none the less shall we continue to say that, even in spite of imperfections, such and such books contain the record of divine revelation, and that such and such men were divinely inspired by God for "world-historic" purposes and ends.

The story of the relations between God and Israel from the earliest times to about eight-score years before the Christian era is contained (in a fragmentary form) in that wonderful collection of books which in Hebrew is known as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, but which, using Greek instead of Hebrew terminology, we call more briefly the Bible, that is, the Book. In these books are contained, as we believe, words of men who were truly touched by the Divine Spirit, though in different ways and in different degrees. In these books, moreover, are contained fragmentary records of a history in which, as we believe, are revealed to us the will and purpose of God. In these books are contained a quantity of laws (of different ages and authors, though all put into the mouth of one man, Moses, speaking in the name of God) which, as we know, have largely determined the character of the Jewish religion for twenty-five centuries, and, as regards some of the laws, even for longer. Seeing

that the course of development taken by the Jewish religion may, in some wide and general sense, be said to have been foreseen and predetermined by God, we may also, in some wide and general sense, ascribe to all those multifarious laws the will and sanction of God. But, in a narrower and more definite sense, we can say of them that, so far as they preserved and trained the Jewish people and community in seasons of stress and peril, they fulfilled the divine intention; while to many of them, apart from and beyond such influence, we ascribe inspiration, because they are in themselves great and noble and true. In fact, we may piece together all the most essential elements and doctrines of the Jewish religion as it now is (apart from the doctrines of immortality, and of the universal salvation of all men, bad and good alike, with, perhaps, a few other teachings) from carefully chosen extracts from the Law, from selected verses from the Prophets, and from assorted fragments from the Writings. In each of the three divisions are to be found ore and dross, kernels and husks, temporary things and eternal things,—or whatever other words we choose to employ in order to express the truth that the Bible is a collection of writings, parts of which, in the fullest sense of the word, we may well call intensely inspired, and to parts of which, on the other hand, we do not ascribe such immediate and primary inspiration.

In other words, we find in the Bible much which is sublimely true and great, and which—as we believe—will always be so regarded; much which teaches and helps and strengthens and comforts us, as it taught and helped and strengthened and comforted our forefathers; much which was, and is, and (as we

believe) will always be, considered as the essential doctrines of our religion, its very kernel or foundation. On the other hand, we find in the Bible some things which we discern to be inconsistent with its best and sublimest portions, and others which, though they may have played their part, and been of use, in days gone by, seem to us to-day no longer valuable or beautiful or true.

However much we may wish that we could discern no imperfection in the orations of a particular prophet, or in the laws of a particular code, we must never juggle with our conscience, or play fast and loose with our reason. For conscience and reason are the two noblest and divinest of all God's gifts, and it is our duty to follow whither they lead. Let us never seek to say, "This is good and true," unless we sincerely believe that it *is* good and true. Let us, moreover, never lower the level of the *best* by seeking to put what is less good upon the same height. People who have tried to maintain the equal excellence, truth and inspiration of the whole Bible, or of the whole Law, or of all the Prophets, have only done Bible, Law, and Prophets an ill turn. We shall gain more general adhesion to the best and greatest by freely acknowledging the presence of the less good, or even, it may be, here and there, of the not good.

So far as the Biblical writers themselves are concerned, we may roughly say that only two classes of them claim inspiration. Others were inspired, as we think, but they do not claim inspiration. The Psalmists, for instance, were, in many instances, surely inspired by God, but they do not claim inspiration. Few persons nowadays would regard the authors and compilers of the books of Joshua,

Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, or Nehemiah as inspired, though there may be passages in some of these books in which the author records the product of inspiration, or in which he may, for the moment, himself have been inspired.

The case of the Prophets and of the Law demands, however, more careful consideration.

The Prophets, as we know, thought that they were inspired by God, and they delivered their utterances as divine oracles. It was not so much, as they believed, they who were speaking as God who was speaking through them. I am convinced that they were sincere. But are we also able to say that they were right? Was what they said dictated to them by God? What are we to suppose that their usual formula, "Thus saith the Lord," really means? It does not surely mean that God audibly whispered the words into the prophet's ear. It means that to the prophet his words seemed without question the certain message of God. He was impelled to utter them by a force which seemed to him to be divine. In the famous case of Jeremiah we know that he would often have preferred to keep silent. But his conscience would not allow him. He had to speak, though to his own individual disadvantage. And what he had to say seemed to him to be indubitably the order of God. But was it really the order of God? Personally I believe, and the belief of the Jewish religion is, that essentially it was.

We have no other ultimate test than the excellence of the prophets' words, their truth, goodness, value, originality, influence and effect. So far as we honestly believe them to be good and true, so far as we know that their effect and influence have been towards goodness and truth, so far are we assuredly justified in

holding them to be inspired. But God uses human instruments, and the instrument remains human. Even the inspired prophet is not rid of his humanity. He still has his human prejudices, passions and limitations. His words are still in many ways the product of his place and of his age. He may censure his people and predict their doom, and yet in some things he may share their vision, and his horizon may be as theirs.

I believe that it is our duty, with loving care and devout reverence, to sift the words of the prophets as regards their excellence and truth. Though we may wistfully say to ourselves from time to time, "Would that there were no sifting work for us to do; would that all the words of a prophet were equally good and true, and that we might assume that they were all equally good and true just because they are attributed to him," we must not yield to such an impulse. It is not a lazy faith which God asks from us. He has not arranged the laws of his relations with men to suit our convenience and our comfort. We have to remember that in no man's words and in no human book is contained perfection. The divine perfection cannot be represented in human words. It is, we may almost say, part of the duty imposed on us by the ideal of that divine perfection never to relax in the earnest and persistent application of all our highest faculties towards discriminating between the human and the divine, so that we may the more truly hear amid the human words the divine voice.

We have also to remember the interesting fact that many of the prophetical books are compilations, and that editors and compilers are speaking to us in these books as well as the prophets themselves.

Nevertheless, the breath of God has often touched the lips of the editors. We should not to-day, in editing fragments of another man's words, add to them, or in some cases substitute for them, words of our own (without in any way indicating which pieces are his and which pieces are ours). The editors in those far-off days saw no wrong or harm in doing this, and, so far as the greatest scholars can discover, some of the noblest, and therefore most inspired, passages in the Prophets are due, not to those prophets themselves, but to their unknown and forgotten editors, to whose labours we owe the preservation of the prophetical writings, and also these notable and excellent additions.

The inspiration which is claimed by the Law is of the same kind as that claimed by the Prophets, though it is expressed in a somewhat different form. Everybody remembers that the usual wording with which groups of laws are introduced in the Pentateuch is the following: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying." Who the compiler of the laws was, and who wrote the narratives in which the laws are interspersed, the Pentateuch does not declare. The famous utterance known as the Ten Commandments the Pentateuch asserts to have been spoken by God, not to Moses only, but to all the people of Israel. The narrative would seem to ascribe to God a voice such as the voice with which man speaks to man, and it may even be that this is the manner in which the editor of the Book of Exodus wishes us to believe that all the laws were given to Moses. God spoke to him out loud; he heard a voice, and this voice was the voice of God. God spoke to him, face to face, as one man speaks to another. But our present conception of God does not allow us to believe that

God ever spoke to anybody as one man speaks to his neighbour. (It would hardly even allow us to believe that the Voice from Sinai was a specially created and immaterial voice, as Philo and other Jewish writers believed, who warmly repel the inference that the "voice" implies that God has a form.) Not in that way does Spirit speak to spirit or God to man—according to what we now believe. Therefore the literal accuracy of these statements breaks down. We can no longer believe that the people heard God's "voice," because we do not ascribe to God a "voice" any more than we ascribe to him a mouth; we do not believe that God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to his neighbour, face to face, one opposite the other. Such ideas could only grow up when people still believed that God was circumscribed or limited in space, and that he possessed a *form*, however impious and impossible it might be to make a representation of that form in plastic material, and however hidden God might keep it from the eyes of man.

But the greatness of the Ten Commandments is not impaired even though the "voice" of God did not utter them, or even though a voice specially created for the occasion did not proclaim them. Their supreme greatness, just like the supreme greatness of the words of the Prophets, can, it is true, only be proved by internal tests. They have to stand, as it were, upon their own value. After all, can there be a better test than this? For even supposing we could believe that God had a mouth, how could we believe that he spoke the Ten Commandments *except because we are convinced and assured that they are good and true*? Suppose, after the most careful study and thought, after

consultation with the wisest and best men we could find, we felt convinced and assured that the Ten Commandments, even though they are introduced by the phrase, "And God spake all these words, saying," were neither good nor true, we should then be compelled to say: "Humbly and earnestly we have tested them, and we are now, at last, convinced and assured that these ten utterances are neither good nor true; therefore we believe that the chronicler is mistaken. Because we are convinced and assured that they are neither good nor true, therefore we believe that God did not speak them." Thus the test of divinity, or of inspiration, is not that a certain chronicler asserts that God said certain words: the test for us can only be that we are convinced and assured that those words are pre-eminently good and true. Thus, at the bottom, those who believe that God said the Ten Commandments with his own voice, and those who, like myself, do not believe that, are yet really united in the *ultimate* reason why they believe the Ten Commandments to be divine. They both believe it because they think that those ten utterances are profoundly good and true. We are well aware that the "Voice of Conscience" is a mere metaphor, and that there is no voice and no audible sound, but we do not therefore argue that there is no conscience or that it does not "speak." In the same way, though God did not utter the Ten Commandments with an audible voice, there is nevertheless a true sense in which he may be said to have enacted them.

It is most important that parents and teachers should explain that it is no light and casual "testing" and "gauging" to which I here refer. To distinguish the higher truth from the lower truth

needs thought and care and experience. Young people are not to say lightly: "I do not think this is good and true; therefore it is not good and true." They are probably not yet capable of judging. What has been accepted by our forefathers, what is found in the Bible, must not be lightly rejected or condemned. Trouble and thought are necessary, and even more. The pure heart, the purified will, must also have their say in the final award. There must be no prejudice, no passion; there must be serenity, reverence, honesty of purpose, earnestness of mind.

As to the other laws in the Pentateuch over and above the Ten Commandments, they comprise an extraordinary and remarkable mixture of ordinances on all sorts of moral, social, legal and ceremonial matters and affairs. Many ancient nations have looked upon their old customs and laws with immense reverence and respect. Many have believed that their laws were due to some one particular law-giver, and that he was inspired by God to draw up and announce his code. As a matter of fact, in such cases the laws are usually not due to one man or to one age. They have grown up gradually, and many of them represent older customs turned into laws either with or without modifications. Quite similar is the case with the laws of the Hebrews as recorded in the Pentateuch, though in many of these laws we may also, as we believe, read the will and purpose of the eternal God.

The story of the growth and development and codification of Israel's laws is long and intricate, and cannot be told here. The Israelites had a vivid and abiding tradition of a great man who, at the very outset of their national history, was unto them

Prophet, Deliverer and Lawgiver. With God's help he led them out of the Egyptian bondage, and at God's bidding he gave them laws. That Moses was a great and historical figure we may fully believe. But legend has clustered round his name and his life. No record of his life remains which was written soon after his death. So we can never know exactly what this great man Moses did and said, or what laws he promulgated. The stories about him were told and retold and changed and embellished. Many miracles grew up in relation to his deeds, making them (as men then thought) still more wonderful and more divine, for God was not yet realised in law.

The total result, of which the oldest *written* portion is probably, as the best scholars now hold, about four hundred years subsequent to Moses, and the latest about eight hundred, we now possess in the Pentateuch. Many of the laws must be much older than the compilations in which we now read them, and there may be laws, such as the famous Ten Commandments, which (in a shortened and simplified form) go back to Moses himself. But all of them —the latest like the oldest—are equally referred to him.

Moses was the original lawgiver, and old laws, when, later on, they were written down, or when, still later on, they were put together and formed into a code, were confidently ascribed to him. Moreover, just as the editors of the Prophets saw nothing wrong in fathering their own changes and additions upon the prophets whose imperfect scrolls they edited, so did compilers and adapters and later legislators see no harm in fathering their additions and adaptations upon Moses. It was for long thought to be justifiable and right to bring good

thoughts and wise laws before the world under the name of some great and revered personality. Moreover, many of the laws, when compiled, were already old laws or old customs, and were genuinely believed to be Mosaic. Many, especially of the later laws, deal with sacrifices and with ordinances about priests, their maintenance, dues, privileges and duties. It may be that, in some few cases, the priests ascribed to Moses ordinances and arrangements which were of advantage to themselves, but, on the whole, the good faith of the legislators need not be doubted. The laws they adopted, adapted, devised and arranged were, in the large majority of cases, all drawn up with the belief that a holy nation, obedient to the will of God, would, by their means, be best and most efficaciously secured.

Thus the Pentateuchal codes contain many laws relating to circumstances and conditions which no longer exist in our midst (such as polygamy, slavery, sacrifices), or to subjects where we to-day have different laws (such as the laws about land, divorce, monarchy, sickness, sanitation, and so on). Even the most orthodox Jews of to-day in England would hold that a large proportion of the laws are not applicable to modern Jews living in another country and in wholly different conditions. Such laws, then, are interesting to study, but they are obsolete. Others, again, are connected with outward purity and with outward holiness, of which the most important are the laws about food, for these can be, and by many Jews are, still observed to-day. Others deal with Sabbaths and Festivals and their right and due observance. Finally, there remain the moral laws, the laws about righteousness and justice and pity and loving-kindness. These laws,

almost always in the letter, and *always* in the spirit, can never grow old or become obsolete. They are eternally fresh and good and true. They still set up before us the ideal towards which we should aim. They bid us be pure in thought and deed, truthful, just, honourable, loving, active in goodness and well-doing. They bid us love God and love man. What can laws and ideals do more?

CHAPTER XIV

OF CONSCIENCE AND MOTIVES AND THE BIBLE

In the first draft of this book no chapter was more adversely criticised by my judges than this one. This was partly due to the fact that the subject with which it seeks to deal is extremely hard. It is a subject which, perhaps, need not have been included in the book at all, and I would ask parents and teachers to consider whether it is, or is not, desirable to say anything about it to their children. If it is desirable, then the stage at which the desirability begins should also be borne in mind. The adverse criticism was also due to this, that none of my critics, except one, was a professed student of philosophy, and still worse, that I, the writer, am painfully ignorant of that subject. It is open to argument whether any one who is not a philosopher ought to write on ethical questions at all. He is liable to make blunders; and he is also liable to be gravely misunderstood. And for the same reasons the critics (with all respect to the excellence of their intentions) were also liable to make mistakes: it may be a case of the blind and the short-sighted tumbling about together.

Yet a book on religion has occasionally to cross the boundaries which separate religion from other provinces of human thought. It has to speak on matters which pertain to ethics and to psychology. And that is the case here. Who will say that a few paragraphs on conscience

are outside the limits of a book such as this? But it is precisely here—as regards the conscience—that all the trouble has come.

One of my critics was especially severe. When he read the draft, he thought that my book was intended to be placed in the hands of children, whereas now it is intended for parents and teachers only. The change might alter his judgement. As things were, he thought that the tendency of the teaching would be to make children and young people conceited and sophistical. The dictates of their own little, poorly furnished and ill-regulated consciences were to be regarded by them as the supreme authority. What they thought right was right. It must override the wishes and views of their parents, the accumulated wisdom of the community, the highest injunctions of the Bible. What a door was thus opened to desire and sophistry! A child or a youth wants to do such and such a thing. How quickly will he find reasons why it is desirable, proper and right to do that thing. "Yes, my dear mother, I have come to the conclusion that this is the thing which it is right for me to do. My highest nature, the voice of my conscience, which is the voice of God, tell me that this, and only this, is what I must do." And what is this conscience? Perchance merely personal desire dressed up in the garb of conscience, but so artfully dressed up that the very person who dressed it up falls a victim to the delusion. "There is nothing higher and nobler, my dear mother, than the voice of conscience; nothing truer and more sure." So the conceited young sophist talks; and so he follows his inclination, and thinks himself a wise hero into the bargain!

Needless to state that such practical deductions would be an entire perversion of my intended teaching. And yet, perhaps, it is needful to state it, for my critic thought that the one was the logical outcome of the other. Still

more needful, however, so to clarify the teaching that the criticism becomes unjustifiable, not only as regards the intention, but also as regards the result. My intention is of small matter ; the question is : What do I say ? I must seek to avoid the very possibility of misunderstanding.

The whole chapter arose out of the subject with which it deals at its close, and to which it was intended to lead up. Is the authority of the Bible weakened by the new conception of it ? Is it weakened by a disbelief in the physical miracles which it records ? And secondly, what exactly was, or is, or should be, that authority ? What is its relation to the "authority" of conscience ? (For we should all agree—should we not ?—that conscience has some *authority.) The Ten Commandments are mixed up with physical miracles. The newer conception of the Biblical narratives, which has been set forth in this book, leads us to believe that the Ten Commandments were not spoken by God in the manner described in Exodus (chaps. xix. and xx.). Is the authority of the Ten Commandments thereby impaired ? My object was and is to show that the authority of the Ten Commandments is not impaired, but I can, as I believe, only do this by setting that authority in its true relation to the authority of conscience. The object of the chapter is not really to weaken other authorities, but, on the contrary, to strengthen them. Of course both my critics and myself must start from a common platform. We must both agree in disbelieving that the Ten Commandments were spoken by God in the manner, and under the circumstances, recorded in Exodus xix. and xx. We have both to assume that, at some period in their growth, children are to be told that we have to separate the Commandments from their setting. The problem common to us both is : how to preserve the authority of the Ten Commandments when they are thus separated.*

The drift of my reply is to show that, still as of old, God comes first. Still, as of old, God is the origin and the source. Still, as of old, righteousness and truth have only appeared on earth and in man because God is, because of the divine source, the divine origin. We recognise the divinity of the Ten Commandments, because in us there is divinity. The undivine cannot recognise the divine: the non-righteous cannot recognise the righteous. Because the Commandments are good, therefore they are of God. And it is we who have to recognise that they are good, in order to render unto them a voluntary moral obedience. It is only because we have goodness—the knowledge of right and wrong—in us that we can recognise that the Commandments are good. And it is only because God is that we have goodness in us. This, then, is the chain, and these are its links. God starts the whole thing in the old conception as in the new. Nay, more. For I believe that the chain and the order of the links are the same whether God "spoke" the Commandments in the manner recorded in Exodus or whether he did not. He comes first: then we with our conscience, our reason, our knowledge of good and evil; then the Commandments with our recognition of them as "divine."

But, perhaps, the trouble has come because I did not sufficiently bring out the old useful Aristotelian distinction between first in nature and first in time. I do not mean (as perhaps I was supposed to mean) that each individual child has to be, as it were, freshly presented to the Ten Commandments for him to adjudicate on their merits and "divinity." The conscience of each individual must be slowly and carefully formed by a process in which the Ten Commandments will themselves play a part. Each child must be told to trust his conscience so far as it agrees with the commands of his parents, the accumulated moral wisdom and experience of the race,

the highest injunctions of the Bible; he must mistrust his conscience if it seems to go against these. Only slowly, with great searchings of heart and of brain, dare we go against those who are older, wiser, better and more experienced than we. Let us be careful that we do not confuse the voice of conscience—the pure conception of right—with the impure suggestions of desire, inclination or selfishness.

If my remarks are taken with these provisos and saving clauses, they will not—in their now modified form—cause (as I hope and believe) misapprehension or uneasiness. On the contrary, I trust that, rightly explained, they will tend to make the children more humble and reverential upon the one hand, and more truly conscientious and self-reliant upon the other. For the four virtues which these four adjectives connote are not incompatible with each other. Moral independence, at the right stage and in the right sense, is not inconsistent with moral humility.

Let me start this chapter by asking: Why do you and I ever take any trouble either to refrain from doing what we think to be wrong, or to do what we think to be right? Several answers suggest themselves. To please and obey our parents might be one. To please and obey God, our Master and our Lord, might be another. We feel and know and are assured that it is right to please and obey our parents, to please and obey God. But we also feel and know and are assured that certain actions are wrong and certain others are right in themselves. We do not necessarily think of our parents or even of God in relation to these actions. Directly they come into our minds, we at once feel and know and are assured that they are right or wrong. Let us speak of this

feeling, knowledge and assurance as our "conscience." And so we might say that we take trouble to refrain from doing what is wrong, or to do what is right, because our conscience so urges and orders us. (I will not here attempt to discuss the further and very difficult question what exactly our conscience is, and how it has grown up, not merely in ourselves, but also in the race.) If it be asked, Why do we bother our heads about, or recognise the jurisdiction of, conscience?—the true reply, as I believe, is: We bother our heads about, and we recognise the jurisdiction of, conscience, because, in the last resort, and whatever its exact history, we believe that conscience has arisen owing to the existence of the all-wise and all-good God. We believe that there is a reality in righteousness because we believe that God is righteous, and therefore when we obey conscience, we believe that in a very real sense we are obeying God. Thus morality and religion are inseparably intertwined, for whenever we do what we think right, we believe that we are obeying God and doing his will; whenever we do wrong, we believe that we are disobeying God and violating his will. The authority of conscience lies for us, in the last resort, in our belief that if it were not for a righteous God, there could not be an ordering conscience.

Thus this feeling, knowledge or assurance of right and wrong, which bids us do or refrain from doing, which causes remorse when we violate its orders, and satisfaction when we obey them, is a part or aspect of the divine image in which we are created. It is our noblest possession, and should be treated with the most scrupulous care. Moreover, it is not something *apart* from us, it is a part of us. Each part of us is liable to be influenced

by every other part, and no part is, as it were, born full-fledged. Our reason is divine, but it grows; we are never very wise, but we are, let us hope, less wise at ten than at twenty. And at ten, and even at twenty, we cannot always depend upon our conscience to tell us unerringly what is right and what is wrong. The conscience has to be informed; it has to become wise and delicate. It has to learn to distinguish between what is really good and what is seemingly good. And so it has to depend for this upon the consciences of those who are older and wiser, upon the recorded consciences and judgements of the best and wisest and most "inspired" men of the past. Our conscience may lead us astray, because it is ill-informed, or because it has been warped by mistaking inclination for duty. In any difficult situation, in any new problem, its decisions will need testing by reference to others, or by reference to the Bible, as containing very wise moral judgements of inspired men, as well as by anxious thought and humble prayer. But, nevertheless, conscience, in spite of its frailty and its imperfections, may rightly be called divine, and when purified, tested and strengthened, it is the final court of appeal for the grown-up man and woman, that is, for those who have reached a condition in which their lives are more or less in their own independent control. Behind and beyond this court of appeal it is, in the last resort, impossible to go. Yet a final court of appeal may make mistakes, and so conscience, though we may fitly call it divine, cannot be perfect.

But the remarkable thing about conscience is that just as it may tell us what to do, so by doing what we ought we improve our conscience. The eyes of

conscience become keener by good and wise action; they become duller and more contracted by evil and foolish doing. Hence a further solemnity about our whole life. As we do, so *and more shall* we do. As we *do*, so shall we *know*. The better we *do*, the better we shall *understand*. The better we understand and know, the better we shall do. It is a regular circle. Result becomes cause. Narrow goodness leads to narrow insight. Poor achievements end in a cheap conscience.

It is, as I said, conscience which tells us that certain motives or actions are good. Simple motives and simple actions are accepted by conscience in childhood. A child feels that it ought to please and obey its parents, that it ought to please and obey the good and wise God. Behind, then, all motives stands, in the last resort, our conscience, stand ourselves approving (or condemning).

We speak of good motives and bad motives. Thus the wish to please our parents is a good motive; the desire to injure our neighbour is a bad motive. Some good motives are better than others. One might create a scale of motives, and one might show how some motives which were justifiable in one age —which were as good as could then be discerned— are less justifiable now, because we *can*, and therefore *ought* to, "know better." There are ethical motives, and there are religious motives. The highest religious motive is the love of God, the love of him who is perfect righteousness and perfect wisdom, and who is the author and source of our own righteousness and wisdom.

There are two lower religious motives which have had much influence in the world, and about which a few more words may perhaps be fitly added here—the

fear of divine punishment, the hope of divine reward, whether in this world or the next. We cannot deny that they are motives which have impelled men to refrain from evil and to accomplish good. How far the "good" thus done has been and is the highest good in quality and purity, is another question. We might, however, ask: Are these motives in themselves good motives? Do trained and educated consciences approve of them to-day?

I fancy the answer to such a question would be something as follows: Wherever the reward hoped for is itself of a moral and religious character, the motive is one which we can approve of even to-day. And so, equally, as regards the punishment feared. If I hope to become better and wiser by a certain action, if I hope, by doing the right, to know God more fully, whether here or hereafter, such motives are pure and good. Even if I hope to secure the happiness which will be contained in becoming better and wiser, the joy which will be contained in knowing God more fully, the motive is still pure and good. But if the motive is to obtain a boon which in itself is not connected with goodness, knowledge or God, then the motive seems more doubtful, and may even be wholly objectionable. And so with regard to the fear of punishment. If we refrain from evil lest our souls become stained with sin, lest we grow less sensitive to goodness, less appreciative of love, and more distant from God, whether in this world or the next, the motive is pure. If we refrain from evil for fear of the pain and remorse which such becoming worse may bring with it, then also is the motive pure. But if we refrain through fear of a punishment which should hurt the body, but not the soul, or of a punishment which, in another

world, should hurt the soul, as in this world we may hurt the body, then is the motive impure. To do good for the hope of cakes and ale is a poor motive; to refrain from evil for fear of stripes and weals is a poor motive.

Yet these motives, poor and inadequate for us to-day, may have been necessary in the development and strengthening of human goodness. God has thought fit to use them in the process of human education. The higher motives are later than the poorer motives, and were only attained or revealed when man was, as it were, able to profit by them and make use of them.

If we read the Book of Deuteronomy and other books of the Bible, we shall find frequent examples of the poorer motive. "Do the right, and you will be prosperous. Do the wrong, and you will be unhappy." But in the later Rabbinic period, the higher motive is constantly put forward. The Divine Spirit so educated our forefathers and illumined them that sayings such as "The reward of a command is a command" (*i.e.* the reward of doing good is becoming good), "The punishment of a sin is a sin" (*i.e.* the punishment of doing evil is becoming evil), grow frequent and habitual. The commandments of God are to be done for their own sake and from love, not for the rewards which will result from them. The Rabbis realised the inadequacy of the motive of fear. The Law—the will of God—must be observed for its own sake and for the love of that will and of its divine source. They invented a technical term "for its own sake," which literally means only "for its name." But they saw how, even within the individual, the higher motive might grow out of the lower. Obey God's commands

for the sake of reward, and you may at last obey them for their own sake. Out of the fear of God may spring the love of God.

Let me here observe that the outward rewards and punishments promised and threatened in the Law must not be condemned or dismissed too lightly. For, first, they affect the nation, not merely the individual. It is not merely the individual's own hope of happiness or fear of pain which is appealed to, but rather his desire to obtain happiness for his family, his tribe, his people. Secondly, we have to remember that there is some causal connection between righteousness and prosperity. Man, after all, is not being bribed or frightened by results which have *no* relation to his deeds. There is, and, as we believe, there should be, "in the nature of things," *some* relation between righteousness and prosperity. A world in which righteousness *always* produced misery—even external misery—would not be a world which was *all the more* ruled by God than ours. There is therefore some truth in the connection, though it is not a truth which is always exemplified, and though to do righteousness for the sake of obtaining prosperity does not constitute the best and purest motive for well-doing.

It may be added that we do not presume to say what will be the destiny of the human soul after our bodily death. It may be that all of us have need of "punishment"—for a punishment which is disciplinary and not retributive. We do not venture, we are not able, to surmise what the nature of such punishments may be. All we need feel sure of is that no punishments will befall us except for our own good, and then the fear of them will not take the place of purer and more spiritual motives.

In the same way we do not know, and we cannot presume to say, what may be the nature of God's rewards. As that beautiful verse in Isaiah says, in the old English version (though it is probably not the meaning of the Hebrew): "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." These rewards will, however, not be the motive for our right-doing except in so far as we conceive them as closely connected with the fuller knowledge of God, which itself implies a fuller knowledge of righteousness and a deeper apprehension of truth. We may well and properly do good in order to obtain God's rewards, if by those rewards we mean a fuller realisation of righteousness and of God.

I have said that behind all motives, suggesting, accepting, condemning, or amending them, stands our own self, stands finally our conscience. Not a conscience in proud independence and conceited assurance of infallibility, but a conscience which is continually seeking, as occasion arises, to improve its delicacy, its depth and its insight. This is the conscience, of which I think I was right in saying that we take trouble to refrain from doing what is wrong, and take trouble to do what is right, because our conscience so urges and orders us.

But some ardent Jews, some sincere and noble persons, might perhaps here say that there is something even behind conscience, which is at once both the supreme *arbiter* of what constitutes right and a supreme *motive* for doing it. "Why do we do right, do you ask?"—so they say to us. "Why do we try to refrain from yielding to temptation?"

It is because the *Bible* tells us that we ought to do right, and because the *Bible* tells us that we ought to avoid wrong. How, again, do we know and judge what is right and what is wrong? It is because the *Bible*, and especially the *Pentateuch*, has told us that such-and-such things are right, and that such-and-such things are wrong. The Bible is the word of God, and we know what is right and wrong because the Bible tells us what they are. And even as we know what is right and wrong from the Bible, so is it the Bible which supplies the motive and the reason for our doing the right and avoiding the wrong. We should not care to resist temptation, or have the strength to do so, unless we knew through the Bible that God had bidden us resist it. "We seek to be kind and just and loving, because God in the Bible orders us to be so."

What are we to say as to this? I fancy that we must distinguish. So far as those who write and speak thus about the Bible mean that we are less likely to do and to be good without a belief in God, without a belief that God is the source and guarantee of righteousness, I entirely agree with them. I have, in this book, again and again insisted that the strength of the call of conscience lies in our belief that its ultimate author is God. I have insisted that the very existence of goodness in man is due to the existence of a permanent and divine goodness which is prior to, and independent of, ourselves. I am inclined to believe that this is what those persons, who declare that we do good because the Bible bids us, really mean. They hold that morality—the supremacy of righteousness—cannot, as the phrase goes, get on without religion.

Perhaps they would say in reply to this: "Very

well: assume that this is what we do mean, but, if so, we must add this, namely, that if human righteousness cannot 'get on' without religion, so religion cannot 'get on' without the Bible."

What do they mean by this? I suppose they mean that people will not continue to believe in God, and will not continue to believe that God is the source of righteousness, unless they *also* believe that the Bible is his "word," and that in the Bible he has commanded us to be holy and good. There will otherwise, at any rate, be no *living* belief in God sufficiently strong and impelling to enable men to resist temptation, and to stir and spur them forward on the path of righteousness.

Happily there is no question of losing the Bible! There is no question of not continuing to use it as the great source of moral and religious truth. There is no question of its not remaining the chief source from which our conscience will be fed, stimulated and inspired. There is therefore no question whatever of "getting on" without the Bible.

The difference between Liberal and Conservative Judaism *at this point* has not to do with the religious excellence of the Bible, but with the *proof* of its excellence. We both say that the Bible is inspired, but the Conservatives (if I understand them aright) say that the inspiration of the Bible (together with the accuracy of its miracles) is the *proof* of its excellence (as well as the guarantee of its authority), whereas we Liberals say that the excellence of the Bible is the proof of its inspiration. The excellence, like the authority and the divineness, of the Ten Commandments, for example, lies not in the fact that the Ten Commandments are in the Bible, or in the miraculous

incidents which are supposed to have accompanied their promulgation ; it lies in themselves.

And if it lies in themselves, the excellence can only be acknowledged and revered by those who have a conscience through which the good and the true are recognised as such. The divineness of the Bible—as consisting in this, that the Bible has within it much goodness and truth, and that the source of goodness and truth is God—can only be recognised by those who believe in God. To a person without a conscience, and without a belief in God, the Bible would have no authority and its message no appeal.

Yet that the Bible has strengthened conscience is emphatically true. And that the Bible can and will continue to strengthen conscience is also, to my thinking, unquestionable. The Bible was and is for Jews the greatest expression of God's will, the fullest measure of his revelation unto man. No other book is so manifestly inspired ; no other book speaks to us with the same authority—the authority of its excellence.

But some will reply : " The Bible cannot even strengthen conscience unless you ' believe in it.' And you do not ' believe in it ' unless you believe that it is the absolute, undiluted and perfect word of God. It is not enough to say that the command, ' Thou shalt not steal ' is divine, because righteousness is divine, and whatever helps to its production, or prevents the accomplishment of sin, is divine. That is not enough. The command ' Thou shalt not steal ' is divine, because it is in the book, or, more accurately, it is divine because God said it. We know that stealing is wrong, *because* God has told us it is wrong."

Here it is, I think, that our friends exaggerate.

The splendour and greatness of the Bible we feel as well as they, but we do not believe that stealing is wrong *merely* because it says so in the Bible, or that we only know that stealing is wrong *merely* because in the Bible we are told that God bade us refrain from stealing.

If you ask me why I believe that there is a divine element in the Bible, I can only reply because of its religious excellence, because of its righteousness and truth, because of its effects for righteousness and truth. And if *you* believe that there is not only a divine *element* in the Bible, but that the Bible is *all* divine, I do not understand how you can believe that, unless it is because you believe that there is nothing in the Bible but sheer and perfect goodness and truth. The excellence and the goodness prove the divineness.

Or let us put it this way. Suppose we heard a supernatural voice telling us to act in a certain way. Unless we believed that its author was good, the voice would have no authority for us. How should we know whether the author was good? I see no other test than this: if what the voice said commended itself to our God-given conscience. Thus always we come back to the same ultimate test, our trained and educated conscience, the slow product, it may be, of long social growth, itself in any individual case liable to error, and only gradually acquiring better insight and depth, but yet in the last resort guaranteed and rendered possible by God.

Man can only depend upon himself for his estimate of right and wrong, truth and falsehood. God, as we believe, helps him, but invisibly, inaudibly, internally. Yet I do not mean that every youthful individual conscience, or even every adult conscience,

can off-hand proclaim, without doubt and hesitation, in complicated situations, the right and the wrong. It is, indeed, for most of us *usually* easy to know the right: the hard thing is to do it. We know that we ought not to be lazy and ill-tempered and selfish: yet we frequently are all three, wittingly and knowingly. But it is not *always* easy to know the right, and far be it from me to encourage conceit, precipitancy, false independence, unwillingness to take advice, affected superiority to the great words and ordinances of the Bible. All I want to urge is that the moral and religious excellence of the Bible is not contained anywhere than *in* that excellence, and is not proved except *by* that excellence. And *of* that excellence our human consciences are necessarily the only judges. From the very nature of the case there can be no other. The breakdown of the miraculous does not therefore destroy the authority of the moral and religious excellence of the Bible: for that authority cannot be *outside* the excellence. It can only lie *within* it.

Thus the divinity of the Bible can only be proved by the goodness and truth of the Bible. The Bible itself played a very large part in educating us, and in enabling us to perceive its goodness and truth. Certain utterances, certain statements, are not good and true because they are found in the Bible, but the Bible by including them has been a chief means by which we have gained a knowledge of them, and by which we have, as it were, had our conscience so purified, so moralised, that it can now serve to us as a clearer and surer test than it might have done had there been no Bible to instruct us. Thus the Bible has helped us to prove its own divinity by its own excellence. For divinity means to us eternal

righteousness and truth. If you ask me to believe that a book, a law, a saying, is divine, you must ask me to believe that it is divine because it is good and true, and I can only be asked to believe that it is good and true if my conscience, after sifting the matter as best I can, consulting other persons wiser and better than I, and maturely weighing and considering the question all round, allows me to hold and believe that it *is* good and true. If goodness is the test of divinity, divinity cannot be the test of goodness. And, after all, for us to-day there is no meaning in divinity except goodness and truth. A bad or false God is a contradiction in terms. But if such a God existed, he would have no authority over us except the authority of power. Out of *prudence* it might be wiser for us to conform to his commands : our *consciences* he could not control.

Now if this be so, if, namely, the measure of the divinity of the Bible is its measure of goodness and truth and of its influence for goodness and truth, then surely its divineness is very great. But it is not all divine, for it is not *all* perfectly good, and *all* perfectly true. There is a lower human element as well as a higher divine element, for though the Bible is all written by men, yet, in the light of what has already been said in this book, it is true to say that its goodness and truth are divine, and that its errors and its inadequacies are human. Yet we have always to remember that what may be inadequate for us now, and even erroneous, may *in its own day* have been a moral advance. Hence even in what is now recognised as error there may be past inspiration.

What we get from examining the Bible itself is what we might expect to get before we begin. For

we could not expect to find perfection in any human product. Perfection is the inalienable quality of God, which even he cannot grant to the beings whom he has made. Perfect righteousness, perfect truth, are not capable of being embodied in a book, or of being contained in any single generation or in any human mind. The Divine Spirit, as we believe, helps the human spirit in its growth and development. God reveals himself in different degrees to man, but the most inspired writer or speaker is still a man; his inspiration is no guarantee that he will not make mistakes. He will exaggerate; he will err; he will have his national limitations and prejudices. Even in his very conceptions of righteousness he will remain, in many ways, the child of his age. All this we should expect *a priori*, for the divine cannot be completely contained in a human brain, a human heart, a human will. God cannot make man his secretary or phonograph; in his perfection God remains alone. No human being can be invested with his absoluteness. The errors and limitations which we find in every collection of words attributed to a man, however much also attributed to God, are just what we might expect.

Every book, be it the collection of books which the Jews regard as "the Bible," or be it the larger collection which our Christian fellow-citizens regard as the Bible, or be it any other collection of sacred writings which other groups of men, such as Mohammedans or Buddhists, regard as *their* Bible, must come before the bar of our careful, sober, humble, fearless, honest, intellectual and moral judgement. No book can be taken at *its* valuation: we can regard each book only as our reason and our conscience, acting with all care and reverence, may

dictate. The Hebrew Bible need not fear to come before such a tribunal. However much better and purer human reason and conscience may become, I do not believe that they will ever refuse to bow in reverence before Prophets, Law and Writings, or ever deny their excellence, nobility, inspiration.

But this does not mean that *every* announcement of the Prophets, or *every* ordinance in the Law, will be regarded as equally excellent, noble and inspired. We have seen how it was that the Prophets with all sincerity believed that what they felt themselves impelled to say was the message and order of God. They were not wholly wrong, but they were not wholly right. They were (as I believe) inspired (and even their editors were sometimes inspired), but this inspiration did not destroy and supplant their human personality: it only, as we may say, using sensuous metaphors to express spiritual realities, coloured or purified or deepened it. They had thoughts and visions which carried them, in part, beyond the range of their contemporaries, but which, in part, were limited and determined by current opinions, prejudices, passions or desires. All that we can do is to separate, so far as we can, what appears to us permanently true and good from what appears to us transitory, or from what appears to us as, now at least, without value and truth. And when I say "appears to us," I again do not mean what appears to me individually, off-hand and irresponsibly. As the social conscience of the community helps to train the individual, as my knowledge of good and evil comes to me from my environment, from study, from the teaching of the past and of my contemporaries, so too my judgements about the "permanent" and the "transitory" in the Bible.

Those judgements must be based upon careful study, upon the opinions of the men most qualified to speak, upon the moral and religious consciousness of the community, and of the best and wisest persons within it.

Similarly as to the laws. We have seen how all the Pentateuchal laws, of whatever date, were put, one and all, into the mouth of Moses, who was supposed to have received them from God. In many cases the laws were compiled from other laws or from traditional usages already existing. They were not new inventions of the moment. To the compiler the laws which he picked out as good and useful and true were laws to which God (as he believed) had given his sanction and approval. To us, however, these laws, as I have already pointed out, are only divine through their own excellence, or divine through their effect for good. Many moral laws we may regard as "divine" or inspired because of their subject-matter. Some ritual laws, such as the Sabbath, we may regard as divine or inspired because of their effects. We might, perhaps, in a certain rather distant sense, regard the dietary laws as inspired, even though, or even because, we are well aware that they are merely codifications and adaptations of customs and taboos, either common, or consciously opposed, to those of many other nations at similar grades of civilisation and opinion. Nevertheless, we might perhaps regard them as inspired, if by their observance the Jews have been helped towards righteousness, or disciplined in holy living. Such a belief would not necessarily imply that we are bound to observe them ourselves, for it does not follow that we require such disciplinal crutches any longer, or that for us, with our changed

belief as to their true origin, they can serve as crutches, even if crutches were good for us to have. This remains to be considered.[1] Other laws again, such as the laws about sacrifices, may not seem to us divine either in one sense or the other, except that (as in the theory of Maimonides) they may have been *educational*, seeing that while they made concessions to the current ideas as to the meaning of worship, the Biblical sacrifices were to be offered to one God, and not to many gods. Finally, some laws—not many—are simply instances of what we now call superstition, that is, of a moral and intellectual standpoint which has passed away, because the increased knowledge and experience which God has vouchsafed to us have raised us above it. Enough, however, remains, even after all deductions have been made, to justify us in regarding the so-called Mosaic Code with abiding reverence and admiration, even as we must also humbly and ardently honour it when we remember the place which it has filled, and the influence which it has exercised, in the long history of Israel. We look with veneration upon a code which has wrought such effects for good upon our ancestors and indeed upon the world at large.

[1] One of my critics, whose notes were only too few and far between, says that it should be added here—and I commend his remark to the earnest attention of teachers and parents—that we may require other kinds of discipline, peculiar and more suited to our own age. And is not (so he exclaims) one good test of the divinity of laws and ordinances, if they were the most suitable discipline for the human soul at the time when conscience approved and accepted them? Are they not divine because they were part of the divine training and education? But this (he observes) does not mean that a time does not come (as he thinks it has come as regards the dietary laws) when they have rightly to pass away. Our discipline to-day may consist in the sustained courage and insight necessary to distinguish the abiding from the temporary, the living from the obsolete, and to fulfil those ethical and religious ends for the sake of which those fading ordinances were enacted and enjoined. The more difficult discipline is ours. Moreover, let it not be forgotten (says my critic) that revelation is continuous. Nothing that has helped mankind has existed in vain. We are the better for its existence even though we ourselves require it no more.

The ideal command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and the ideal injunction, "Ye shall be holy," come home to us with deeper truth, confirmation and authority, when we find them invested with the sanction of the ages, inscribed upon the banner of our history, and proclaimed as the keynote of our religion by unknown speakers and writers, upon whom, as we believe, there rested the inspiration of the all-perfect God.

CHAPTER XV

OF LEGALISM AND THE LAWS OF THE PENTATEUCH

The object of this chapter, and of the chapter which immediately succeeds it, needs a little explanation and introduction. I want to show that, on the one hand, there is a real difference between Liberal and Conservative Judaism as regards the Pentateuchal Law, but that, on the other hand, Liberal Judaism is still in a certain modified sense (to be explained) a legal religion. And, again, I want to show that Liberal Judaism, not less than Conservative Judaism, is not an easy-going religion, but that it is a religion involving and demanding energy, resolution, self-sacrifice, discipline.

I would impress upon parents that Liberal Judaism takes up a different attitude towards the Law because of a different belief as to its origin and character, not because of practical convenience. A man who eats hare because he deliberately believes that to-day the dietary laws need or should no longer be observed, may be respected. A man who eats hare because he finds it convenient, is to be despised. The old "authority" of the Bible may no longer (as I have explained in the last chapter) be theoretically defensible. But how infinitely worse is the arbitrament of convenience. And how often has this new authority succeeded to the old. The time has surely come, as one of my critics puts it, to "urge

parents no longer to halt between two opinions. Truth they must seek and follow as their guide, and not convenience. They must tell their children clearly: 'Our grandfathers observed certain ordinances because they found the order for their observance in the Bible. I want you to observe them, not merely because they are ordained in the Bible, but because their observance will help to make you good and faithful, because the religious brotherhood to which you belong requires the observance of these ordinances in order to keep its mission clearly before its eyes. You must keep them even though they cost you trouble and sacrifice. If you neglect to keep them, you are a coward and a traitor. Other ordinances, again, which our grandfathers kept will no longer help to make you good, and will not further the objects of our brotherhood. These you need not observe.'" I agree with these statements of my critic. The time for plain, simple, honest speaking has come. But the time has also come, or rather it has never ceased, for strenuousness, for resolve, for sacrifice. The great object of education is not to give our children a good time. The great object is to give them the taste for righteousness and for the love of God.

For an immense period in the history of Judaism the most important part of the Bible was undoubtedly the Pentateuch. Though the older custom seems to have been different, yet it became usual to place only the Pentateuch in the Ark or Chest, which constituted, as it still constitutes, the most sacred spot in the Synagogue. The Prophets found no place there. The Pentateuch was regarded as inspired in a special and peculiar sense. The events described in it were all literally true: all of them (at least from Abraham onwards) happened exactly as they

are told. Egyptian plagues and Israelite deliverance : the thunders of Sinai, the proclamation of the Ten Words, all took place exactly as the record declares. All the laws were supposed to be as good, as perfect, as wise, and as immutable, as God himself. All were supposed to date from the same epoch. They were all given by God to Moses. They had not existed before his time; after his death—so far as the written laws are concerned—none were added. Thus Judaism, for good and for evil, became a legal religion. Legalism gave to Judaism great qualities and great strength: it also gave to Judaism —or rather to the Judaism of the long legal period—the defects of its qualities, for every religious system which has strength is likely also to possess some weaknesses.

People tended to identify goodness with the keeping of the commands in the Law. Many of these commands were of a ritual character ; prominent among the ritual laws were the laws about food and the laws about the Sabbath. These ordinances were interpreted and elaborated by oral tradition and by the so-called Oral Law, and they were frequently interpreted in the direction of increased stringency. Thus the Pentateuch says : " Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk." The Rabbis gradually interpreted this law in such a manner that they forbade *any* meat being eaten or cooked with milk or with the product of milk. Similarly extended and elaborated became the laws about the Sabbath. The Pentateuch says that upon the Sabbath day you must do no work. But what is " work " ? What is work for one man might be play for another. But instead of leaving the definition of work to the common sense and good feeling

of the individual, the Rabbis, because the Sabbath was part of a legal system, entered, as lawyers are often inclined to do, upon long casuistical and juridical discussions, with the result that they extended the conception of work in a most extraordinary manner. To write a letter is work; to play the piano for pleasure is work; to carry an umbrella is work, and so on. The spirit of the command tended to be suffocated under the letter. For to one man (the professional) to play the piano is indeed work; to another it may be the most delightful relaxation. And so on. I have known young men at Oxford who broke the spirit of the Sabbath by going to lectures (their actual work) upon Saturdays, but who observed the letter by refraining from taking written notes. To such unsatisfactory results (as it seems to me) may the casuistry of legalism lead. Yet such was the native power of Judaism, such the force of the other non-legal elements of the religion, such the deeper religious sense of the Rabbis themselves, that the evils of legalism throughout the ages have been less large and important than its excellences. *For so long as it was really believed that the Law in its entirety was the exact word of God*, so long was it a delightful duty and a blissful sanctification to observe it. The evils of legalism are most conspicuous when its theoretic basis is withdrawn.

What are these evils over and above those to which I have just alluded? There is, first of all, a certain danger lest attention should be too much concentrated upon the ceremonial, instead of upon the moral, aspects and elements of religion. A "pious" Jew has occasionally been regarded as a man who is very strict about the dietary laws and the

Sabbath. But obviously a "pious" Jew is far more correctly described as a Jew who has a passion for righteousness and a constant sense of the divine presence. But because others besides Jews can have a passion for righteousness and a constant sense of the divine presence, therefore the tendency has arisen to make the piety of the Jew consist of actions which are only performed by himself. None besides himself observes the Sabbath and the dietary laws. Therefore his special *Jewish* piety is shown in these, and not in the passion for righteousness and the constant sense of the divine presence. This is a great danger, for the essence of Judaism thus tends to be driven away from the moral and the spiritual sphere into the ritual and the ceremonial. It is the danger of degradation.

Moreover, the ritual and the ceremonial are easier than the moral and the spiritual. If too much attention is given to them, it is quite possible (since many men have only a limited capacity for religious activities) that the moral and the spiritual may be neglected. The right centre of gravity for the individual, and for religion as a whole, may be improperly deflected.

Again, there is a certain danger lest outward acts become more important than inward character. If the whole duty of man is expressed in *not* doing so and so many bad and illegal actions, and in *doing* so and so many good and legal actions, he may tend to forget that what he really has to aim at is not merely outwardly to *do*, but also inwardly to *be*. His actions should be the expression of his character, just as his character is partly built up from his actions. But it is quite possible to conform to the enactments of a code (even to the parts of it which are

moral), and yet to possess an unsatisfactory character. Outward conformity (extending even to almsgiving) may go with a character which lacks elevation and nobility. A man may be proud, sanctimonious and formal, and yet, in an outward sort of way, he may observe the Law. The spirit of religion may be absent when the letter is very much to the fore.

Other dangers of legalism there are into which I need not enter here. Nor, on the other hand, need I explain (I have done so elsewhere) that it is quite possible to combine the most careful observation of the entire Law and of all its Rabbinic developments with the most beautiful spirituality. Though the two can be opposed, they can also be united. A passion for righteousness and a constant sense of the divine presence may be combined with a delighted fulfilment of every minute Sabbatical and dietary enactment. Upon the whole, the two have gone together well, and excellent characters, spiritual, strong and humble, have been the product of the Law. Moreover, it must be remembered that Being cannot be produced except by Doing: to *be* good you must begin, as you will also end, by *doing* good. Conduct is the starting-point of righteousness and holiness, even as it is their result.

To-day, however, the whole question has to be newly reviewed. For the basis of the old legalism has crumbled away. We no longer believe in the Mosaic and divine origin of the *whole* Pentateuchal law; we no longer believe that all the ordinances date from the same period, and that they are *all* perfect, immutable and divine. Some of the ceremonial laws may be, in their ultimate origin, much older than Moses, resting as they do upon primordial conceptions, and even upon superstitions or taboos,

which have wholly passed away, while others of the ceremonial laws are undoubtedly much later than Moses.

We no longer think it right to obey the whole Law, whether Pentateuchal or Rabbinic. The law of Leviticus xix. 18 still seems to us a high ordinance of God; in the law of Leviticus xix. 19 we can see no divinity to-day, and we have no hesitation in disobeying it. We are willing to wear "garments of two kinds of stuff mingled together," and we do not take any precaution to prevent such garments from being worn by our children or by ourselves.

How far, then, is Judaism still a legal religion? How far is Liberal Judaism—that phase of our historic faith the outlines of which I am attempting to set forth in this book—a legal religion?

It is clear that our Judaism is not a legal religion in the same sense as the Judaism of our forefathers. We no longer put the Pentateuch, as it were, between our consciences and God. We no longer accept all its ordinances as binding and divine. We no longer think that to be religious means to fulfil a series of laws,—a series of doings and avoidings. In our rejection of the absolute authority of the Pentateuchal code as a *whole*, in our insistence upon spirit and being and character as well as, even more than, upon doing and observance, we differ from the conceptions of many of our forefathers. Is our religion, then, no longer rightly to be characterised as a legal religion at all? Has the Law no place in our conception of Judaism? Has law no place in our conception of religion? It is to these questions that we have now to address ourselves.

First of all, then, as regards the Pentateuch. No phase of Judaism can forget the place which that book,

or collection of books, has held in history. *The* Law —the Law of the Pentateuch—has been a great source of Jewish heroism and of Jewish holiness. The Law, and the study of the Law, have prevented the Jews from succumbing morally, spiritually and intellectually to persecution and degradation.

Nor can we forget that the framework of the Jewish religion has come to us through the Law, just as, in its narratives, the Law tells us of the origins of our race and of the beginnings of its history as a nation. We fill this framework with fresh meaning, but the framework itself comes to us from the Law. Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, the Day of Memorial and, above all, the Day of Atonement,—all these owe their origin to the Law.

But there is much more still. As we pass from the Ceremonial to the Moral, we are arrested half-way by that remarkable institution, which in one aspect is ceremonial, in another aspect is moral—the Sabbath. Whatever the origin of the Sabbath may be beyond and outside the Hebrews, its origin for us and for Europe is the Pentateuch and the Decalogue. Who shall measure the beneficent effects of the Sabbath upon our own brotherhood and upon the world at large?

Then we pass from the Sabbath to the Decalogue in which it is contained. Are there not laid down here for all time some of the foundations of human society, of human law and order, of monotheistic religion? The sanctity of human life, the sanctity of marriage, the sanctity of truth,—are these three not proclaimed there in no uncertain tones? What praise is not deserved for the Tenth Word, which sets a curb to human appetite, and demands that sin should be checked at its source?

Reverence for mother and father leads up and on to the reverence of God, the one God, who, though he "fills all space," is not contained by space, and is other than all material things. He is the God of history, the Father of man. The Decalogue stands for Theism, as against Polytheism on the one hand and Pantheism on the other. It stands for Theism even *though* it be true that, to the author of the Second Commandment, "other gods" had a real significance. For we have to look at the Decalogue in the light of history and as illuminated by the whole development of Judaism. Many years before the rise of Christianity the Ten Words were given the extended meaning which we now apply to them. Together with the "Shema" in Deuteronomy, they have formed for more than two thousand years the charter of our ethical Monotheism.

But the Pentateuch is not limited to the Decalogue. We remember, in devout homage and gratitude, that it contains also the famous declaration of the Divine Unity. Here too we need not worry our heads as to what the Hebrew words originally meant. That is a question of great interest truly to scholars and antiquarians; it is sufficient for us to know that for more than two thousand years they have meant little less than they mean for us to-day. They have meant that there is one God only, and that this sole God is One.

What follows upon this solemn declaration of Monotheistic faith? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"—the injunction which lies at the basis of *our* Theism, the injunction which implies that there can be and is a communion between God and man, and that on man's side this communion can and should rise to the heights of love.

The Pentateuch, moreover, tells us of the Divine Character. We need not, and do not, accept every word it tells us about God; we accept, and do reverence to, its *highest*. The just and loving God, pitiful and gracious, the father of the spirits of all flesh, the ruler,—yes, even the dispenser of punishment and reward,—*this* we accept, *this* we cherish and proclaim.

Not less is our debt to the Pentateuch for its ideals of human action. Still as of old we hold up the banner on which is inscribed: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Still as of old we repeat the command: "Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself"—that command which caps and crowns its more familiar forerunner—"As thyself shalt thou love thy neighbour."

Though we have passed beyond many of the conditions and conceptions of the Pentateuch, we yet recognise that here we find the ideal of social righteousness, the ideal that here upon earth, with the divine help and sanction, man must seek to establish the kingdom of God.

Justice, purity, compassion, combined with simple happiness and gratitude, these are the ideals of the Pentateuch, and these (with others) are the ideals (for earth) of Judaism to-day.

The Pentateuch throws them into the form of laws. In the honour which we pay to the Pentateuch for all these reasons (an honour which is independent of dates, authorship and miracles), in the place which we give to it in our worship and our synagogues, we may still rightly denominate Judaism as, in that sense at all events, a "legal" religion even to-day.

But this is not all. There is another and a deeper, a more "inward" and essential, sense in

which it can be rightly said that Judaism is, partially at any rate, a legal religion.

Judaism still gives a peculiar place and honour to the conception of Law.

Judaism, I take it, holds that man, to be as good as he can be, must be ruled by law. He must be ruled by a law which he accepts, but the source of which he recognises as outside him and greater than he. He must feel the compulsion of law, and yet, through that compulsion, he must rise to a higher freedom. He stands, as we have seen, between the animals and God. The animals are freer than man; they are also more bound than man. They are freer, for they know, and bow down before, no outside law. The lion and the gnat, desiring to do one thing, do not, through a constraining law, do another. But they are more bound, because they simply follow the sting and lead of their impulses and instincts and desires. The constraint of law is the beginning of the higher freedom; the human freedom which leads up to the freedom of God. For God we may regard as either completely free or completely bound. He is bound in his own freedom. He never wants to do anything but what he does. He is the subject of law, but the law is his own law. Man is never wholly free or wholly bound. The external law never wholly becomes his own law, and for two reasons. First, because it is *God's* law, and therefore man is always subject (however freely) to a law which is not wholly his own law, seeing that its source is outside him. Secondly, because man is never *completely* moralised. He is always straining towards an ideal, which is ever receding. He never can become *so* good that there is no *possible* conflict with temptation or desire. Nevertheless, his freedom,

the realisation of himself, the fulfilment of his being, reside and consist in the free acceptance and execution of the moral law. The more he freely fulfils that law, the more *man* he becomes, and the more he becomes like unto God. The outward must *also* become inward, but however inward it becomes (however much the ideal of Jeremiah xxxi. 33 is realised), it still always remains the law of God.

This, then, is the permanent legalism of the Jewish religion. Man has to recognise a *Must*, a Compulsion, a Law, which by his own efforts, and by the help of God, he can more and more completely discover and understand, which he can more and more completely fulfil and obey. He has to bow down in homage and reverence to that law—the law of duty—and in the reverence, and in the free fulfilment of it, he has to find, and he will find, his true human freedom. "There is no freedom," said the Rabbis with truly inspired insight, "there is no freedom except through the Law." It is with morality as with art and culture. In the sublime words of Goethe, which parents whose children know German should make those children learn by heart:

So ist's mit aller Bildung auch beschaffen :
Vergebens werden ungebundne Geister
Nach der Vollendung reiner Höhe streben.
Wer Grosses will, muss sich zusammenraffen ;
In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister,
Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben.[1]

[1] A friend has supplied me, for the benefit of those who do not know German, with the following English version of Goethe's lines :—

For ever thus the trend of progress flows !
Unfettered, lawless spirits strive in vain
Perfection's crystal summits to attain.
Who would be great must his own ruler be ;
In self-restraint his power the master shows,
And law alone it is that makes us free.

We may also observe that the developed legalism of the Jewish religion rests upon a certain practical psychology, a certain view of human nature. Man as an animal has a certain number of instincts, passions, desires. These he needs for his human life. But these instincts, passions and desires, which are to form the basis of some of his simplest and purest joys and of some of his greatest achievements, are to be transfigured in the service of the ideal. They are to be used, tamed and sanctified. They are to be put under the discipline of law, and to find through law their purification and hallowing. Through law man is to sanctify himself, and (in another sense) he is also to sanctify God. This conception is at the root of the Rabbinic desire to spread a network of laws and ordinances over human life. The result may not always have been happy or wise, but there was a sort of immanent logic in the process. Every part of life was to be consecrated. Man was not to destroy his passions, his members, his instincts, and his desires, but he was to tame and use and hallow them. He *was* to do this, because he *could* do this. In obedience to Law he was to fight for and achieve his freedom. This is the meaning of that other profound and truly inspired Rabbinic utterance that man is to thank God for, and to serve God with, his evil inclination. The evil inclination can lead to lust: through obedience to law it can be transformed into the purity of family life. The evil inclination can lead to gluttony: through obedience to law it can be transfigured into self-control. The due and cheerful nourishment of the body can even minister to the glory of God. And so on. There are human virtues, such as courage or industry, which depend upon the bodily nature of man, but which

use that bodily nature for the creation of spiritual and moral activities.

The fundamental idea of Jewish ethics—self-sanctification—is closely connected with the idea of law. All life is to be passed under the eye, and in the service, of God, the supreme Lawgiver. It is to be a holy life. There is to be no separation of secular and religious. All life is to be religious. There is no inner ring of the "religious": all men are to be religious. There are not two moralities: there is but one morality. Men may vary in their fidelity to the law, but the same constraint lies upon them all. Life is to be holy, but it is also to be happy, for happiness is to be found in holiness. God himself is not unhappy, but happy; not unblissful, but blissful. The more like him man becomes (so far as man can imitate him at all), the more happy he becomes. Through law to freedom, and through law to happiness. It is true that the attainment of the highest good, the fulfilment of the highest ordinances of God, must involve for man much struggle and renunciation. It is true that to obtain the higher there must be a sacrifice of the lower; but this sacrifice is not for its own sake; it is for an end beyond. The struggle, the renunciation and the sacrifice, are not to fill the whole of life. They are not to destroy happiness; they are to purify happiness. The ideal life is a full life: it finds room for the transfigured joys of the senses, even though it gives more space and time to the higher joys and duties of the spirit. Or shall we rather say that it seeks to spiritualise sense? Through law spirit is to be poured into matter, and spiritualised body is to be uplifted to the glorification of God.

There may be saints of law in Liberal as well as in

Conservative Judaism. No one has more accurately described such saints than the great Roman Catholic poet, Coventry Patmore, showing all unconsciously exact and sympathetic comprehension of the Rabbinic ideal and point of view.

They live by law, not like the fool,
But like the bard, who freely sings
In strictest bonds of rhyme and rule,
And finds in them, not bonds, but wings.
Postponing still their private ease
To courtly custom, appetite,
Subjected to observances,
To banquet goes with full delight;
Nay, continence and gratitude
So cleanse their lives from earth's alloy,
They taste, in Nature's common food,
Nothing but spiritual joy.
They shine like Moses in the face,
And teach our hearts, without the rod,
That God's grace is the only grace,
And all grace is the grace of God.

The observance of the moral law is, therefore, in itself a joy. The more freely it is observed the greater is the joy. Nevertheless, Judaism recognises that, till the higher freedom is won, there must inevitably be a period of struggle. A man who always did right, and always fulfilled the highest demands of righteousness, without effort or struggle, would have almost outstripped the limits of humanity. Moreover, the exigencies of life demand that for man to reach the highest of which human nature is capable, and to fulfil, so far as man can, the ideals of the moral law or the ideals of the law of God, he must not only experience effort and struggle, but also suffering, renouncement and sacrifice. Only through these can he learn and rise to the best and the highest.

It is necessary to say a few words here about *asceticism*—the training and discipline of soul and body through hardship and suffering — because modern Jewish teaching, through its prevailing opposition to Christianity, often inclines, as regards this subject, towards exaggeration and error.[1] It is true that there has been a great deal of asceticism in Christian teaching and practice. It is also true (at least in common with my fellow-Jews I venture to think so) that some of this teaching and practice has been false and injurious. But in their opposition to it, because it is false, and in their opposition to it, because it is Christian, Jewish teachers in modern days have been apt to become exaggerated and one-sided themselves. They sometimes tend, I cannot help feeling, to make Judaism somewhat too soft and comfortable a religion, or at any rate to ignore that element of true asceticism, that right emphasis upon suffering and renouncement, which Jewish ethics, no less than Christian ethics, demand.

It is true that Judaism, while regarding the earthly life as a prelude to another and better life, nevertheless regards this life as not *only* a prelude and preparation, but also, in a certain sense, as an end in itself. It is also true that Judaism desires men to be happy even upon earth, that happiness, even in fairly

[1] One sometimes wishes that Jewish teachers knew a great deal more about Christianity, or a great deal less. Every now and then either result would benefit their doctrine. If they knew much more, they would, I humbly think, be occasionally less one-sided, and if they knew much less, they would be less one-sided too. For if they knew much less, they would be less afraid of saying things which are true, but which are sometimes exaggerated by Christian teachers. I sometimes feel that the old Rabbis of the Talmud and the Midrash were less one-sided than some modern Jewish teachers. They seem to be less afraid of saying things which are like the things which Christian teachers say—just because, I fancy, most of them had very little knowledge of Christian teaching. These things are therefore to them perfectly Jewish, and sometimes even importantly Jewish.

ordinary senses of the word (for example, the happiness of family and home, the happiness of education and knowledge, yes, even the happiness of the "fig tree and the vine"), forms a part of the Jewish ideal. Lastly, it is quite true (and this is very important) that Judaism asks for the taming and sanctification of the natural (that is, of the bodily) instincts, passions and desires, not for their destruction. As we have already seen, Judaism demands from all men the hallowing of life, the spiritualisation of the material. Total abstinence is less characteristic of Judaism than temperate enjoyment to the glory of God. The union of man and woman can be made pure and holy, and the blessing of God can be asked over it. Celibacy is not more holy than matrimony. To drink no wine (other things being equal, and important special reasons for total abstention being, for the moment, put aside) is not more holy than to drink wine. The best thing is to drink wine with perfect moderation, and to invoke over the wine-cup the blessing of God, the Giver.

All this is true. But nevertheless it is not the whole truth. Judaism teaches other things besides, however difficult it may be to weave the two sides of its teaching into a perfect unity. Judaism is far from being content with the life of comfortable happiness. It has advanced beyond the ideal of a portion of the Book of Proverbs,—the ideal of comfortable burgher felicity,—an ideal, by the way, which another portion of the same book has itself transcended. "Whom the Lord loves, he chastens; he gives pain to the son in whom he delights." A higher happiness is won through endurance and sorrow and pain: the higher rungs of the human ladder are only ascended through sacrifice and

suffering. To the old Rabbi "the study of the Torah" was synonymous with the best, the highest and the happiest life. And what did the old Rabbi say was the method by which the Law must be studied? "This is the way that is becoming for the study of the Torah: a morsel of bread with salt thou must eat and water by measure thou must drink; thou must sleep upon the ground, and *live a life of trouble* the while thou toilest in the Torah." And yet: "If thou doest thus, *happy* thou art, and it shall be well with thee; *happy thou art in this world*, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come."

It may be that the old Rabbi had to deal with peculiar conditions. It may be that in his day it needed some peculiar strength of purpose to grapple with the life of study. But nevertheless his words have a profound significance, and I think were intended to have a significance, for all time. In his days and in ours, hard is the good. In his days and in ours, the ideal is not easy, but strenuous, not soft, but severe. In his days as in ours, without labour no prize; in his days as in ours, without sacrifice no crown. No high achievement can be brought to pass without a struggle, nor are self-denial and self-mastery synonymous with pleasure and with ease. That life is incomplete in which sorrow has never entered, in which the hand has not sometimes been held out deliberately to receive suffering and pain.

"Beloved," said another old Rabbi, "beloved are sufferings." We are to thank God for sorrow even more than for joy. Not because, in mere outward fashion, the sorrow of this world is the best way to win the happiness of the next, but because sorrow and suffering, effort and endurance, train character,

because without them we shall, upon the whole, not do the best we can for our fellows, and the best we can for ourselves. If that best for ourselves we still call happiness, then happy are we even in suffering, happy are we even in struggle and in pain.

God, as we must often remind ourselves, possesses a deeper insight and a truer love than we. For as one of my judges beautifully says: "It is comparatively easy for us to make a sacrifice for those we love, but it is much harder to allow *them* to make a sacrifice, even if it be for their own moral good. To suffer ourselves is comparatively easy: to let others suffer is much more difficult. To 'give up' in order to bring pleasure to the beloved is pleasant, but to make the beloved give up so as to strengthen her character or his character, may be nothing short of torture. But the divine love may foresee and permit sacrifice: it is not weak in its tenderness."

God has always reached the highest: he is *there*, and has always been *there*. But man can reach *his* highest only through discipline, arduous endeavour, bracing strenuousness; softness will not bring him even to his human goal.

There is a certain healthy contradiction in our teaching which can never be got rid of. We seek to remove sorrow and suffering. We seek to increase prosperity, happiness, well-being. Yet we say that the highest life involves suffering. We deny that there is any value in the mortification of the flesh for its own sake; we deny that *this* life (however much we believe in another) is or ought to be a vale of tears. And yet we urge that a discipline of the flesh, a discipline of the spirit, every great and good life must experience, and that he who has shed no tears has scarcely learnt all that life can teach him.

We seem to be always seeking to diminish and destroy that which, in the same breath, we declare to be necessary for the fullest and the grandest life.[1]

Perhaps, however, what we chiefly try to get rid of are the sorrow and the suffering which less often ennoble than degrade. Even though these were wholly eradicated, there would still be enough opportunities left for struggle, bracing endeavour and self-sacrifice. In any case we must not be afraid to recognise two aspects of truth because, for the moment, we find it hard to reconcile them. We must not make Judaism one-sided out of a too hasty or eager desire for consistency. The old Rabbis were never afraid of inconsistency. Their religion was too alive for any such fear.

Lastly, I want to point out that the doctrine of living hard, not in the low sensual sense, but in the highest ethical sense of endeavour and sacrifice, is an aspect of legalism. However voluntary such a life may be, it is nevertheless obedience. It is obedience to the law of duty, the law of love, the law of righteousness, the law of service, the law of God. It declares that man must live—to do and be the best of which he is capable—a dedicated life, a life of self-surrender. He surrenders himself to the law, and finds from the law his freedom and *himself*. He puts his neck under the yoke (the yoke of the Law is a favourite phrase with the Rabbis), and this very yoke brings him liberty. He strains to fulfil

[1] One of my critics is dubious how far the doctrine of right asceticism can be made intelligible to children. It will doubtless need a good deal of watering down. Children can at any rate be taught that we learn by encountering and getting over difficulties, both in arithmetic and in life. To do right often means doing difficult and uncomfortable things. Again, they can be shown that soul and body must both be made holy unto God; both must be kept pure and clean; both must be braced up, ready for action, tuned to concert pitch. Flabby self-indulgent people are not admirable, even though they pretend to enjoy themselves.

what the inward law bids him do, and in the fulfilment, however painful, he finds his well-being and his peace. For the inward law is also the law of God, and thus there is conveyed to him, or rather he wins for himself, a conviction of security. The yoke of the law is a privilege; the yoke of the law is a glory; the yoke of the law is happiness. In these reflections and conclusions the old and the new legalism find their apt reconcilement. The gulf between them is bridged over.

CHAPTER XVI

OF THE DIETARY LAWS, THE SABBATH AND THE FESTIVALS

This book is intentionally incomplete. It has omitted almost the whole subject of ethics, and yet Jewish ethics are a very important branch of the Jewish religion. It can only say a very few inadequate words about Jewish ceremonial. For a presentation of Jewish ethics, and for a presentation of Jewish ceremonial, I would like to refer parents and teachers most earnestly and cordially to Mr. Morris Joseph's book, "Judaism as Creed and Life." Mr. Joseph's point of view is not quite the same as mine, as he explains himself in his preface. I differ from him here and there. But, as a whole, the book is, and for a long while is likely to remain, far and away the best modern book in English upon the Jewish religion.

Mr. Joseph deals with ethics and ceremonial, as well as with religious doctrine in the narrower sense of the words. Nevertheless, as regards ceremonial, I feel it desirable to say a few words in the present chapter.

THERE are two kinds of religious ceremonial. The first kind is that which we perform in private; the second is that which we perform in public with our fellows. The ceremonial which we perform in public with our fellows is public worship. And the ceremonial which we perform in private is either worship

or connected with worship. It is intended in the first instance to direct our thoughts unto God. It may and does have other aims and results as well, but its primary aim remains, as I have said, the aim of worship or of helping towards worship.

The division of ceremonial into public and private is not, however, a clean-cut division. There are many ceremonials or ceremonial institutions which affect both our public and our private life. Such, for instance, is the Sabbath, which we observe in our own homes and also by public worship in the synagogue.

What is the object of all *ceremonial*, of all religious *forms*? The first object, I suppose, is to maintain and strengthen the inward religious faith, the inward religious life. A second object is to provide the vehicle for the expression of religious thought and religious feeling—in a word, for religious experience. We—creatures of body and soul—cannot get on without forms. Whether angels need them I do not know. I am convinced that human beings need them. And not merely forms, but fixed forms: not merely the form of the moment, but permanent forms, historic institutions. The observance of such forms and institutions has other objects besides the two already mentioned. In a historical religion such as ours, such further objects would be: (1) the maintenance of a bond with the past; (2) the maintenance of a visible connection with all Jews all over the world.

Now what I would venture to impress upon parents is the paramount importance of making their lives and the lives of their children fully harmonise as regards ceremonial with the religious teaching which those children receive. "Harmonise," that

is, so far as such harmonisation may be within their power. Whatever they themselves do, whatever they bring up their children to do, must be in harmonious accordance with the religious teaching which is given to the children. There must be no disagreement between teaching and life, between theory and practice. Conversely, there must be a doctrinal basis and justification for whatever is done or not done. The practice must be the expression of the theory.

The observance of the Sabbath which the children notice on the part of the parents must correspond as closely as possible with the teaching which they receive. That is to say (apart from *force majeure*) they must not only be taught how the Sabbath should be observed, but they must perceive that their parents and themselves practically observe it in full accordance with the teaching. And so of all other rites and observances, including the dietary laws. As the teaching is, so must be the observance. The dietary laws, for example, must not be neglected unless you are prepared (at the suitable stage) to *teach* that these particular laws should now, or may properly now, be neglected. Whatever is done or not done must be in accordance with, and justified by, the teaching and the doctrine. For all religious doctrine must be expressed in life, and there must be no life—no action—which does not rest upon doctrine, or, at any rate, upon such sentiments and associations as are not essentially discordant with doctrine.

Parents cannot therefore be too careful about the teaching which they give to, or obtain for, their children. They cannot be too careful that their lives should be in accord with that teaching. For the

children to be told that it is right and desirable that the proper observance of the Sabbath excludes and forbids dinner-parties and theatres, and then to notice that their parents give or go to a dinner-party on Friday evening is excessively harmful. It may mean ruin to the whole religious life. For a child to be told that it is desirable that Jews should continue to refrain from eating shrimps, and then to observe its parents eating a shrimp, is a monstrous injustice and cruelty to the religious consciousness of the child.

How the Sabbath should be observed is a separate question. But once hold that it should be observed in a particular way, and so teach your children—then, if you do not observe it in that way, you bring them into grave religious and moral peril. Whether any part of the dietary laws should still be observed by Liberal Jews is a separate question. But once hold that some of them *should* be observed, and so teach your children—then you neglect to observe them at grave religious and moral peril. You have no right to violate any ceremonial, if you do not think its violation desirable, and if you are not prepared to teach that desirability to your children.

The most important "forms" which are performed in private, and which are not *also* connected with the public worship of the synagogue, have to do with food. For I here omit the most supremely important form in all the world—I mean Prayer. Of *that* " form "—if indeed it be a " form "—I have already spoken.

The first such form is " grace " at meals. The second is the " dietary laws." As regards the former, I have no definite teaching to give. There are arguments for grace and arguments against, and, for myself, I keep an open mind. Man is certainly

the only "animal" which can thank God for its food, and this prerogative it may be desirable to preserve in practice. One of my critics writes that the absence of grace at family meals seems to him to savour of religious degeneration. Another (no less profoundly religious) writes: "I never can see why we should thank God so much more often and openly for our dinner than for other blessings. It seems to me a pity to connect prayer with times of eating. I would rather utter a blessing after seeing a fine play or a beautiful picture, or after reading a noble book, or after having taken a lovely walk."[1] A serious danger of saying "grace" is that, in the conditions of our modern life, its use may easily degenerate into a mere form, without any religious emotion or effect. I feel clear that children should not be taught to say grace unless they can also notice that the parent says grace likewise. What is done in the nursery must also be done in the dining-room.

Far more important and difficult is the question of the dietary laws. These laws are partly Biblical and Pentateuchal; partly Rabbinic. The Biblical laws are the laws which forbid the eating of certain animals (such as pig, rabbit, hare, oyster, lobster, and shrimp). The Rabbinic laws (depending upon the interpretation of Biblical laws) are the laws which direct (*a*) a particular method of slaughtering, so that

[1] Another critic writes: "In the Rabbinic code there are actually existent graces or benedictions for several of these things: witness especially the benediction introduced into the morning prayer, whether said publicly or privately, precedent and subsequent to the reading of the Law. For my own part," adds the critic, "I leave grace at meals largely to my children's feeling and impulse. They often suggest it themselves; sometimes I ask whether they would like it. On the Sabbath, however, we make it a fixed rule to sing Psalms and hymns at table in addition to reciting the grace, and I do not see why we Liberals should not encourage this practice. The service book of the Jewish Religious Union is very useful to us for this purpose."

Jews have to employ their own butchers; (*b*) the "porging" of the hindquarters of oxen and sheep; (*c*) the prohibition to eat milk and meat together.

It would take too long, and it would be beyond my powers and knowledge, to estimate the total effect of these laws both for good and for evil. How far have they helped towards the actual preservation of the Jews? What have been and are their hygienic value and result? How far have they created a social barrier between Jew and Gentile? How far *was* that barrier desirable? How far *is* it injurious *now*? None of these questions can be touched upon, far less answered. They are very complicated and difficult. Then come the religious effects of these laws, so far as their religious effects can be considered by themselves and separated from all the other effects. Here we must not exaggerate on either side. I fancy that the *religious* effects of these laws, both for good and evil, are most apparent when the laws are least, not when they are most, easy to observe. I mean this. Take the ghetto life of the Jews of the "middle ages" in Germany, France or Italy. The Jews lived quite to themselves. There was very little social intercourse between Gentile and Jew. The dietary laws, except perhaps for the women, tended to become customs. Nobody thought of eating, nobody had the opportunity or temptation to eat, any of the forbidden Pentateuchal foods. Nobody thought of eating milk and meat together. All was arranged, habitual, easy. The *religious* effect was therefore, perhaps, not so very great one way or the other. Very different becomes the question in modern times, especially for those who mix freely with their Christian fellow-citizens. It is now that the specifically religious effects become apparent, and

both for evil and for good—for evil so far as these laws may lead to formalism and outwardness ; for good, so far as the laws may be a discipline in holiness, and in the consecration of life to God.

How far, then, should these laws be observed to-day by Liberal Jews ?

It is clear that we cannot observe them from the same reasons as Conservative Jews observe them. Conservative Jews believe that these laws are the direct command of the perfect God. We do not believe them to be that. We do not teach our children that they were given directly by God to Moses. Nor can we regard them as divine laws in the same sense as our Conservative brothers regard them as divine. Even if the result of their observance in the past has been, upon the whole, good, it does not follow, under altered conditions, and above all with our changed attitude towards the Pentateuchal code in its entirety, that their observance by us to-day is, or would be, desirable. The matter must be looked at afresh.

As a whole, no Liberal Jewish teacher would recommend their observance. Very few, if any, Liberal Jewish households observe them all. In America, the stronghold of Liberal Judaism, they are all (Biblical and Rabbinical laws alike) neglected. I gather that the same is the case in Germany. But in England a distinction has grown up, which is unknown elsewhere, but *may* nevertheless be sound. Many persons observe the Biblical laws, but neglect the Rabbinical laws. That is to say, they refrain from eating rabbit and lobsters, but they eat meat which is not killed according to the Jewish method, and they eat meat and milk, or meat and butter, together.

Is this the form of the dietary laws which it is good and right to maintain? Is this the form of them which we should teach to our children, and which we should practise ourselves? Mr. Morris Joseph, in that most admirable book of his, which I have already mentioned, seems to think that it is He seems to desire that a determined effort should be made, even by Liberal Jews, to observe the Pentateuchal dietary laws, while abandoning the Rabbinic developments. He thinks that one must not ask for the impossible. One must not, moreover, wish for the maintenance of laws which would render the social intercourse of Jew and Gentile very difficult, if not impossible. He is, therefore, willing that we should abandon the rule about not eating meat and milk together, that we should abandon the rule (if I understand him aright) to eat no meat or poultry which has not been killed according to the Jewish method of slaughter, and finally that we should abandon the ordinance about "porging." But what we should strictly and sternly keep to is the observance of the Pentateuchal laws of the *distinction* of foods, *i.e.* that we should continue to eat no pigs, hares or rabbits; no oysters, turtles, lobsters, crabs or shrimps.

His arguments are that these laws *can* be observed without harmful restriction of social intercourse, and with an amount of self-sacrifice and self-restraint which is wholesome and well within our power. And just because they *can* be so observed, they *should* be observed. It is admitted, *ex hypothesi*, that the observance does no social harm: the self-sacrifice, therefore, and the self-restraint which they involve can only do us good. For here we get a distinct and frequent reminder that we are to be a peculiar

and consecrated brotherhood, and that our ideal is holiness. The restraint we have to exercise in saying at a dinner-party, "No, thank you," if dishes made of these forbidden animals are offered to us, is a religious and ethical help, reminder and stimulus. Any other set of animals would do just as well from the *religious* point of view as hares and oysters. Only as hares, oysters, etc., *are* the animals to refrain from eating which unites us with the historic past and with other Jews all over the world, we had far better exercise our self-restraint in respect of *these*. Such a restraint adds to the sanctification of life; it brings religion down into the sphere of ordinary, everyday occupations; or rather it tends to elevate such a "mundane" matter as eating to a religious level. The glory of God enters even into our food. It hallows our recreation and our meals.

What are we to say about, what line are we to take in regard to, these arguments? That they have value and force cannot, I think, be denied. Whether they will hold the field is, perhaps, more doubtful.

Several of my critics have adversely criticised what I said as to the dietary laws in the first draft of this chapter as it was submitted to them. Some agree with Mr. Joseph, others seem to hold that the observance of the laws is gradually passing away, and that it is wholly unnecessary to hasten the process. Others, again, appear to hold that where I cannot justify or recommend an observance, I had far better leave it alone and undiscussed. So far as those of my critics who agree with Mr. Joseph are concerned, I have nothing to say. But in regard to the criticisms of the others, I should like to observe that this book is written for parents, and that I do not think that a subject so important as the dietary laws

ought to be left undiscussed and ignored. And if I speak about them at all, surely I must say what I really think, I must express my full mind.

If I thought that they should be observed in their entirety, then, whether I were successful or no, I should urge parents to observe them. And if I thought that, at any rate, the Biblical dietary laws should be observed, I should earnestly advocate their observance, and I should entreat parents to make the small sacrifice which is necessary in order to observe them. I would never gloss over their violation, I would never ignore their neglect, if I were convinced that they ought to be maintained and preserved. Liberal Jewish parents must either violate the Biblical laws with a good and clear conscience, or they must not violate them at all. There must be no observance and there must be no neglect, which do not rest upon deliberate and justified opinion. About both observance and neglect there must be nothing casual, slipshod, unthought out.

But let me also observe that the question of the dietary laws, and especially of the Biblical dietary laws, is one on which division of opinion among Liberal Jews is peculiarly legitimate. If there are those who, in simplicity and sincerity, think well to observe the Pentateuchal food-distinctions themselves, and to urge their children to obey them, whether as an aid to holiness and self-restraint, or as an historic link with the past, or as an outward bond between themselves and other Israelites, or as an outward reminder of that dedicated life which Judaism demands, by all means let them do so. There can surely be no objection.

But if my own view be asked, I cannot myself honestly declare that I should urge parents to obey

the Biblical portion of the dietary laws, even though I was myself brought up to do so, and out of respect to my mother's opinions and wishes still continue in the same way.

I will not say that religion does not and should not enter into questions of food. If I have said this before, I exaggerated. For instance, to be temperate in food and drink, to eat and to drink "to the glory of God" and not merely for pleasure, may, I think, be regarded as an element of religion (using "religion" in a somewhat wide sense of the word). Again, I think with one of my critics that a good case may be made out for total abstinence from alcohol under the special circumstances which appertain to England. If every total abstinent would help to cure England of the curse of drunkenness, then clearly such abstinence might be regarded as a religious act.

Next comes the question of health. Is not the production of the healthiest possible body an element of religion? Seeing the immense influence of body upon mind and soul, I think that it is. Nevertheless Mr. Joseph is, in my opinion, right in not resting his case for the observance of the dietary laws upon hygienic considerations. For though it may be true that all the animals forbidden for food in the Pentateuch *are* unwholesome in Palestine, it by no means follows that they are unwholesome in England to-day. And, as a matter of fact, very able doctors assure me that they are not. If, then, I am to regulate my choice of food so as to obtain the best bodily health, I should prefer to follow the advice of the best English doctors rather than the prescriptions of the Pentateuch.

The origin of the dietary laws must not be sought

in sanitation, though sanitary influences may have helped to maintain them. Such taboos in food as we find in the Pentateuch are common to many races, and depend on a variety of superstitious ideas which have no relation to health. They also depend upon a conception of outward purity which is foreign to our present religious ideas.

When we, therefore, remember the origin of these laws, when we recollect their close relation to the conception of outward or priestly purity (one application of which even to-day, in orthodox circles, prevents a man called Cohen, or any other supposed descendant of the priestly family, from entering a house where there is a corpse), if we further remember that these particular food taboos are not united by any illuminating principle,—for we cannot even say that all the animals forbidden in the Pentateuch are unhealthy,—I do not honestly see my way to urge those parents who do not feel inclined to observe, or to teach their children to observe, these laws, that they should put a strong check upon their opinions and their actions, and that they should insistently observe them. Food taboos, which rest, like the law against the two kinds of stuff, on the conception of an outward purity, unrelated to inward purity, are off the line of our modern religious thought. The argument that temperance in food or drink, or the choice of food to secure health, is a form of outward purity which I have admitted to lie within the religious sphere, is sophistical. For the careful choice of food is advocated for the sake of the mind and the soul, in order to obtain the best possible bodily instrument in the service of the mind and the soul. But the outward purity, on which the Pentateuchal food taboos rest, is regarded as an end

in itself. Ritual or outward uncleanness, from the old point of view, is something which you can catch externally as a sort of infection, and from which certain prescribed washings can free you. It is this sort of idea which has rightly passed away, and it is on this sort of idea that the dietary laws depend. The turtle and the hare are regarded as giving this kind of outward uncleanness in themselves, and not because their flesh is unhealthy. It is *this* outward purity, *this* outward cleanness or uncleanness, which are no longer defensible, not the purity of temperance or the purity of health. Hence my grave doubt whether the dietary laws can or should be maintained as an integral portion of our modern religion. If the Pentateuch had happened to forbid all meat and poultry and fish of every kind, and if all Jews had been vegetarians, it would have been, in one way, easier to maintain such a more comprehensive prohibition. For though we should no longer believe that God had directly ordered the enactments, yet there would, or could, be a principle in substitution. We could substitute for the direct divine command the principle of not destroying animal life for purposes of food.[1] But the prohibition to eat pig, lobster, hare, etc., is united and illuminated by no principle. Here we have merely a number of forbidden foods, from the flesh of which we are asked to refrain as a moral discipline and as a voluntary act of self-restraint. I am inclined to think that we must seek to inculcate self-restraint, to

[1] One of my critics *is* a vegetarian. He says: "I believe that the arguments for vegetarianism are simply overwhelming. The slaughter of animals for food is cruel and disgusting: it involves the employment of persons in the degrading work of the slaughter-house which we should certainly not like to undertake for ourselves. If a divine command means a command imposed by conscience, then I think that men will ultimately feel that they are divinely commanded to be vegetarians."

increase the sense of God's presence, and to implant holiness, by means less arbitrary and, in a certain sense, by means less outward. The opportunities for such an end will surely not be wanting.

I am also inclined to doubt whether we could succeed in separating the Biblical from the Rabbinical enactments. To an enormous majority of Jews the two sets form a whole, and the one cannot be maintained without the other. It is true that, in England, there are many families who rigorously observe all the Pentateuchal " distinctions " without observing the Rabbinical additions, but it is extremely doubtful whether such a habit can be made to spread beyond England. Some indeed argue that, from the point of view of health, there is more to be said for the Rabbinic than for the Pentateuchal enactments. For it is alleged that the *bedikah*, or examination of the animals used as " Kosher " food, wards off the chance of the transmission of tuberculosis. Others hold that the dietary laws hang together. The great critic and historian Geiger said of the dietary laws taken as a whole, " *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint* " (" Let them be as they are, or not be "), and I am inclined to believe that what Geiger thought was right from a *theoretic* standpoint will *practically* happen. The number of persons who adopt a compromise will always, I think, be extremely small. It is interesting to note that one of my critics observes (he is a vegetarian) : " If there are to be any dietary laws at all, they must be universal, as binding on Gentiles as on Jews." The majority, however, of those who want to maintain them desire their maintenance from an exclusively Jewish point of view.

Thus one critic writes : " I feel that the brother-

hood should be very slow in throwing off the emblems of its order. I cherish a hope that the Jewish dietary laws may be subjected to the keenest scientific criticism. In so far as they may be found good,—tending to social and physical health and purity—we should adhere to them for the sake of the generations yet to come, and in so far as they may need reforming, we should reform them." This brings in a totally new idea, for hitherto the question was limited to maintaining the Biblical prohibitions as a whole. Another critic writes: "I agree with Mr. Joseph. In this luxurious age the disciplinary effect is worth preserving, and why should we seek to weaken the motives which may lead to so desirable an issue?"

The reply has been already given. We must seek to inculcate and develop self-restraint and self-control in other ways. It is impossible to commend, and to seek to maintain, a practice which does not rest upon a good and admirable doctrine. The dietary laws have a withered root, and must themselves therefore wither. For if I do not believe that they were specifically ordered by God, and if I know that they do not belong to the specific teaching of the Prophets—that they are mere survivals and acceptations of customs common to many early races, and by no means peculiar to Israel—how can I recommend their observance? I might do so, if they had been transformed and transfigured in their adoption, if they had been made the vehicle or expression of noble ideas which were still worth preserving, but this is not the case. The idea upon which they rest, or which they express and embody, is a priestly idea which Liberal Judaism has abandoned or even combats, namely, the idea of outward holiness and of external purity. To us

religious holiness or religious purity affects persons, not things ; it affects the mind or soul and not the body. Hence, for the continued observance of the dietary laws, whether Biblical or Rabbinic, I find no theoretic foundation, no adequate and satisfactory principle, which, believing myself, I can ask others to believe likewise.

I now pass from ceremonial institutions which are solely connected with private life to those which are related to the public worship of the synagogue.

First and foremost of such ceremonial institutions, affecting our private as well as our public worship and religious life, comes the Sabbath. The importance of the Sabbath can hardly be exaggerated. And a very heavy responsibility rests upon all Liberal Jews in the matter of its observance.

Dubious as I am as to the need of recalling some, and keeping others, to the maintenance of the dietary laws, I am profoundly convinced as to the paramount necessity of the observance of the Sabbath. Parents must observe it themselves, and they must teach their children to observe it. Any Liberal Jew who on Friday evening goes to a concert, or visits the theatre, or has a dinner-party at his house, any Jew who on Saturday rides to hounds, or works without compulsion, incurs, in my deliberate opinion, a grave religious responsibility. He is wounding Judaism at a tender and dangerous point. If ever a ceremonial law passed over into the ethical sphere, if ever a ceremonial law deserved the epithet of divine, that law is the Sabbath.

There is no question whatever that by far the most difficult problem in modern Judaism is connected with the keeping of the Sabbath. To shut one's eyes to economic and social facts is the worst

possible folly. It is idle to deny that the present condition of things in the West, in which a vast number of Jews and Jewesses are absolutely unable to "rest upon the Sabbath day," is profoundly unsatisfactory. There is no doubt to my mind that, from a religious point of view, it is a strong argument for Zionism.

But the whole of this gigantically important aspect of the question cannot be discussed in this book. Nor can I discuss the question whether Sunday services should be established in Liberal Jewish synagogues to meet the needs of those who are unable to come to the synagogue on Saturdays. Such questions are outside the scope of this book, however immensely important in themselves.

But from the point of view of parents and children two remarks must be made. First, parents and teachers must explain the grave difference between violating the Sabbath in order to do one's work and to fulfil one's calling well, and violating the Sabbath for the sake of pleasure or convenience. The lawyer who goes to chambers, the shop-assistant who goes to his shop, the clerk who goes to his office on Saturday, may have no choice. They can go to chambers, shop, and office with a perfectly clear conscience: they are none the *less* Jews because they go: they are none the *worse* Jews because they go. But if on Friday evening they voluntarily go to the theatre or the music-hall, then they *are* the worse Jews, then their consciences *should be* seared and sore, then they *are* guilty of deliberate wrongdoing.

This must be the teaching and this must be the practice. It is just here that restraint and discipline and a modicum of self-sacrifice are so essential. It is just here that Liberal Jews have so grave a

responsibility cast upon them: it is here that they can so easily show that Liberal Judaism does not stand for slipshod convenience, but for righteousness and sanctification.

The Sabbath has to be observed in two main ways, of which I have spoken in some detail in the first volume of my *Bible for Home Reading*. To that book I would venture to refer my present readers.

First, there is the negative way of abstention from "work," and from certain kinds of "pleasure," such as theatre-going or dinner-parties. Such pleasures interfere with the quiet, the peace, and the holiness of atmosphere which should distinguish Sabbath eve and Sabbath day, so far as possible. What I mean by "work," and how the word must be interpreted (in the spirit rather than in the letter), I have explained in the *Bible for Home Reading*, and I need not repeat that explanation here. One of my critics has told me to my great delight that several children who have been brought up in accordance with the views there inculcated have religiously thriven. I would only impress upon parents the grave importance of all work which children do on week days being suspended on the Sabbath, and this whether the child likes his lessons or no. The boy who does not learn drawing on week days may draw on Saturday. The boy who is learning English history on week days must read no history on Saturday. And so on. It is just as easy to give and explain to children an *intelligent*, spiritual observance of the Sabbath as it is to put a mechanical and legalistic observance of it before them. They will take to the one, and appreciate and understand it, quite as readily as to the other.

So much about abstention. Even more important

is the question of positive observance. I will not say anything here about bringing children up to attend and to care for public worship and the services of the synagogue. As public worship is of such immense importance in the religious life, it is obvious that no less important must be the diligence which parents and teachers must exercise in order that children should be induced to attend and care for it. No less important that the services, whether special or general, should be such as they *can* care for, both when they are young and when they have grown up. Of all this the present book is not the place to speak.

But a word may be added about the positive observance of the Sabbath within the home. Of great and enduring value upon the character of the child may be the ceremonies connected with the incoming of the Sabbath. I am inclined to think that, from every point of view, it would be desirable to maintain or reintroduce such ceremonies, adapting them doubtless here and there so as to make them in no wise jar upon our deepest convictions, but yet preserving their historic and traditional character. Next to, or even before, the ceremonies which appertain to the Sabbath eve would come the use of family prayer where, as is so often the case, a suitable synagogue service is not available. For it is far better to have a short family service than to make children attend a synagogue of which the arrangements are unsuitable and unsympathetic to them. And outside London or the big towns there is often no question of a synagogue at all. But that the positive, regular observance of the Sabbath should be intermitted for a single week is a grave evil, which should in no wise be tolerated or allowed.

A dear friend of mine—one of the best and noblest of men—was very keen upon *daily* family prayers in the home. I think such prayers would be excellent, but I fear that the exigencies of family life render them very difficult to introduce and to keep up. But the weekly Sabbath service, which can be held at an hour to suit *every* member of the household, including its male head, is essential. It is one of the most important religious institutions which can be observed to-day. It is capable of much variety: each household can arrange a service or a "reading" in accordance with its own views and needs. Such a service, like all religious ceremonial, will remind the child of God and of all that God implies; it will give him an opportunity for private prayer (for "all public prayer is also private prayer"); it may stimulate his Judaism; it may even tend to sanctify the whole of his week-day life.

A Sabbath without synagogue or family prayer is a Sabbath with much of its influence and meaning cut away.

Once more, before I leave the subject, let me urge and entreat every Jewish parent, man or woman, to remember that because he or she may have to work upon *some* portion of the twenty-four hours of the Sabbath, that is absolutely no reason for not using the remaining hours *sabbatically*. On the contrary. It is all the more reason why an attempt should be made to make all the better and finer use of those hours which are left over. It is just here that Liberal Jews should show their fidelity to Judaism and their power of rising above the constraint of circumstance. They must not be the slaves of their environment, but in a sense its masters. They must live in the freedom of the spirit, and in that very

freedom give the letter its due. "Half a loaf is better than no bread." This is true of material bread; it is still truer of spiritual bread. For here I can well conceive that the half may be more than the whole. I can conceive of a household of which one member, or more than one member, may be compelled to work upon Saturday, but where the Sabbath may nevertheless be observed more purely, more devoutly, and to nobler purpose, than in other households where no professional work need be done. Let not, therefore, those who *have* to work upon the Sabbath despair. With a good will and with a little trouble the values and the blessings of the Sabbath may still be theirs.

It is not necessary for me to dwell in detail upon the other occasions on which Jews and Jewesses should meet for public worship in the synagogue, and which they should also observe as festivals or holy days in their own homes.

It is, however, very desirable to remark that the Pentateuchal festivals and holy days should still continue to be the festivals and holy days of Liberal Judaism. Parents should observe them faithfully, and teach their children to observe them faithfully. All the motives which I alluded to before for the maintenance of ceremonial institutions in the abstract apply with increased force to the maintenance of the festivals and holy days of the Pentateuch. I will recall these motives. (1) The maintenance of a bond with the past. (2) The maintenance of an institutional and public religious or ceremonial bond with other Jews all over the world. (3) The desirability, even the necessity, of having an outward and distinctive embodiment for any particular religion. (4) The difficulty, even the impossibility,

of creating any brand-new embodiment for any historical religion. In every phase of Judaism it will surely be desirable to maintain the observance (in synagogue and home) of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, of the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement.

On the other hand, it is not only legitimate, but desirable and even necessary, gradually to charge these old festivals and holy days with fresh and deeper meanings. In doing this, we are simply following precedent. The Pentecost of the Rabbis was a very different festival from the Pentecost of the Pentateuch, and the same may be said for *their* Day of Atonement as compared with the " Day " which is instituted and described in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus.

From that double point of view—maintenance, on the one hand, gradual development of meaning upon the other—let me briefly pass the Pentateuchal festivals and holy days in review.

First, then, the Passover. The Passover is the only one of the five festivals or holy days which may be said to possess a " national " or racial character. All the others (including Pentecost) could equally well be celebrated by men of every race. I am by no means sure that the Passover, with some developments of meaning, could not also be celebrated with fervour and interest by proselytes of every race. Whether this be so or not, one thing to me is clear: namely, the urgent present duty of all Liberal Jews to observe the Passover. And when I say " to observe " it, I mean to observe it properly, with its ancient symbolism and its ancient forms. This means that Liberal Jews must (*a*) observe the first and seventh day of Passover as days of " rest " and

worship; (*b*) observe the old ceremonial whereby for seven days unleavened bread is eaten at meals. It is also eminently desirable to retain in some modified form the domestic service upon the first night of the festival.

I do not believe,—and when such questions can suitably be brought to the notice of children, I should be ready to tell them so,—that God directly ordered Moses to bid the children of Israel eat unleavened bread for seven days. The origin of the rite of unleavened bread, the combination of the *Pesach* with the *Mazzot*, were not *actually* what they are described in the Pentateuch. The more modern and critical text-books on the history of Israel's religion give the actual, as distinct from the recorded, origin of the present observances.

But none the less I strongly urge the maintenance of the unleavened bread. For (*a*) a week's observance of this kind is not anti-social; (*b*) it is not improperly burdensome; (*c*) it is interesting in itself; (*d*) it is suggestive and useful for children; (*e*) it possesses many valuable symbolic meanings.

The Passover celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. The sanest and best modern investigation and criticism hold that some of the Israelite tribes at least did reside for a period in Egypt, that they were "oppressed," and that they did, under their leader Moses, make good their escape.

Thus a basis or residuum of historical fact remains, and this residuum is adequate for the continued maintenance of the festival. But deeper meanings must be poured into the residuum. The Passover celebrates the beginnings of the self-consciousness of Israel; the setting forth of Israel

upon its mission. Thus the Passover, which in one sense may seem to be the most restricted and national of the five festivals or holy days, may be also regarded as the most distinctively universalist. It is the festival which commemorates the giving of a charge, the founding of a mission, the institution of a brotherhood, which were intended to spread the knowledge of God throughout the world. Can a more "universal" festival be desired?

Again, the Passover is the festival of Liberty—liberty in political life, liberty in moral life, liberty in religious life. How immense the range!

But what is Liberty? It is freedom through law. Passover leads on to Pentecost, the festival which celebrates the giving of the Law. The attitude of Liberal Judaism to law has already been described. It is so important and intimate that our critical standpoint towards the miraculous incidents recorded in Exodus becomes of very minor significance. The Festival of Law may therefore fitly be observed by Liberal and Conservative Jews alike.

Tabernacles is the nature and harvest festival, the festival in which we think of the omnipresence of the Divine Being, and of his relation to the world. The later legislation of the Pentateuch shows a desire to bring the festival into relation with history: like the Pentecost it also is made to commemorate the exodus from Egypt (cp. Exod. xxiii. 16, xxxiv. 22, and Deut. xvi. 13 with Lev. xxiii. 42, 43). And I think we may include in the celebration of Tabernacles a reference to God in "history" as well as to his relation to "nature." The two days of rest involved in the festival of Tabernacles should be no less faithfully observed than the two days involved in Passover and the one day of Pentecost. The

total number of such rest days, even when none fall upon the Sabbath, is after all only five.

To these five must be added, thus making seven days of rest in all, the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement. I have said something about these two holy days in my *Bible for Home Reading* (vol. i.). I do not propose to dwell upon them here in detail. Suffice it to observe that these two holy days, in their modern form and charged with their modern meanings, are broadly human. They are the two holy days which deal with the problems of sin, repentance, atonement, forgiveness—problems which relate to and concern all human beings alike. As the New Year, the Day of Memorial seems to me to have little significance. For all the Liberal Jews of the West the New Year must be the first of January. But as the holy day opening the short season of solemn reflection, which is to culminate in the Day of Atonement, the Day of Memorial seems to have ample justification and scope. The relation of God to man and of man to God as regards repentance, the "new life" of virtue, and the abandonment of the "old life" of sin, is so important and so delicate that two days of worship and holy rest are none too much for its adequate consideration. The long service on the Day of Memorial, and the still longer all-day service upon the Day of Atonement, seem to me spiritually profitable and thus religiously justifiable.

Should Liberal Jewish parents teach their children to abstain from food for the twenty-four hours of the Day of Atonement? Such abstention can no longer be regarded by us as a verbal command of God. It must, therefore, be considered upon its merits. From the superstitions which have

sometimes been generated by the Day of Atonement, Liberal Jews will, it is hoped, be utterly free. They can still, therefore, observe the bodily fast without the smallest danger that any of them will think that in the fast as such lies any virtue or merit. The fast is no amulet. Our whole conception of "forgiveness" is so spiritualised that superstition can hardly come in. As therefore this is so, I am inclined to think that the bodily fast should be maintained. The objection to it is that, in some cases, it makes people wish the day to come to an end, and that, combined with the often stuffy atmosphere of the synagogue, it causes weariness and headache rather than keen introspection and eager thought. If the fast makes the mind less fit for, and responsive to, the religious opportunities of the day, I doubt whether a small breakfast before an early departure for synagogue (which I regard as important) is not better than complete abstention. On the other hand, the bodily discipline has its distinct advantages. And there are so very few ascetic incidents in Judaism, as our modern life is organised, that it may be very undesirable to abolish the one such incident which remains. I would prefer to leave the question without any dogmatic assertion upon the one side or the other. As to the supreme importance of the "Day" in itself, and of the desirability of spending it in public worship with one's fellows, I have no hesitation or doubt.

Of the non-Pentateuchal festivals and holy days which are observed by Conservative Jews, the only one which Liberal Judaism should retain is, to my thinking, the Feast of Chanukah or Dedication. That festival celebrates the heroism of the Maccabæan martyrs and warriors, and the preservation of the

Jewish religion at a season of the utmost peril. How it should best be celebrated, and the newer and larger meanings which may, perhaps, be given to it, need not, however, here be discussed. The "lighting of the lamps," associated with Chanukah, is, one must add, a beautiful symbolical rite, which, whatever its real origin, has many claims to be maintained. And it possesses the additional advantage that the Chanukah lamp may be a picturesque ornament in the Jewish home.

With the Sabbath, with Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, with the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement, and with the festival of Chanukah, the individual and the community have a series of ceremonial institutions, festivals and holy days which should be fully adequate for their religious requirements, so far as such requirements can so be met. May Liberal Jewish parents teach their children to honour and maintain them ; may they teach their children to use them for their own religious benefit, for the welfare of Judaism and for the glory of God.

CHAPTER XVII

OF PROPHETIC JUDAISM AND OF LIBERAL JUDAISM AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The last seven chapters of my book were written after the resolution had been taken to turn it into a book for parents and teachers instead of a book for children. It has, moreover, unfortunately not been possible for more than one of my dozen critics to read them, and for the remainder of my work the reader will, therefore, be deprived of the benefit of their suggestions and amendments.

The present chapter, like those which follow it, is not intended to be presented by the teacher or the parent to young children under fifteen. But I see no reason why, at a fairly early age, children should not be made familiar with the great salient teachings of the Prophets, or why they should not be told that it is the Prophets who laid the true foundations, and proclaimed the essence, of the Jewish religion as we hold and profess it to-day. In the pre-critical age men reverently taught their children that the Law came first and then the Prophets. In the critical age we can reverently teach our children that the Prophets came first and then the Law. Why Judaism (in the form in which we present it to them) is still in a sense a legal religion can be simply explained to them. But it can also be simply explained to them why Judaism, in a still more intimate sense, is a prophetic religion, deriving from the Prophets its very essence and core.

Again, the thought which I have expressed in saying that Liberal Judaism is a democratic religion can also be put before children, in a simplified form, at a fairly early age. They will be taught the great adage of the Book of Proverbs: "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." They will be taught how the idea of equality comes into religion, and how it enters, at least to some extent, into the ideals of the Golden Age. In various ways such as these they will be prepared for the fuller and more definite teaching which is suggested in the present chapter.

We have seen that in a certain very real sense Liberal Judaism may still describe itself as a religion of Law. It still looks to the Pentateuch as to one of its main sources. But even more intimately is it connected with, even more closely is it related to, the Prophets. I have sought to explain the connection with Law and with the Pentateuch. In very brief words I will seek to explain the relationship with the Prophets.

I will not base this relationship upon the mere historic fact that the Prophets were the creators of Jewish Monotheism. For the Law, following in the footsteps of the Prophets, teaches Monotheism likewise. But I would rather base the close relationship upon two great characteristics of the prophetic Monotheism, two modes in which their conception of religion is expressed.

The first is their well-known, but never obsolete, opposition and antagonism to ritual and ceremonial and "forms" regarded as the important, or as the main and predominant, constituent of religion; their passionate conviction that the real worship of God

and the real essence of religion consist not in such forms, but in right-doing. "I desire love and not sacrifice." "What does the Lord require of thee? Justice, compassion, humility." The freedom which Liberal Judaism claims for itself in adapting forms and ritual to suit the needs of the age, to make them a vehicle for the spirit of religion instead of an obstruction, is ultimately derived from prophetic teaching. Forms which generate formalism are suspect. Again, that forms have little or no value in themselves, that they are means not ends, is true prophetic doctrine. If a man observes forms and thinks himself a pious soul for doing so, he is on the high road to becoming self-righteous: he is on the high road to becoming an example of one of those types of character which were abhorrent to the prophetic mind. The Prophets taught that the true forms and ritual of religion, the true outward expressions of the worship and the love of God, were to be found in *ethical* and not in specifically "religious" acts. To do a just or loving deed was a "form" superior to offering a lamb (or, as we should say, to going to synagogue). You serve God best by "serving" man. ("He prays best who loves best.") This doctrine Liberal Judaism still maintains. However important it may hold religious forms to be, however important—to name the chief "form"—it may consider public worship, it can never forget that the service of Him who is essentially *moral* perfection must be expressed in *moral* endeavour.

But this, the first, is not the special characteristic of the Prophets upon which, in this brief chapter, I desire to dwell. The second is implied in the first characteristic, but is not identical with it. The

first characteristic declares that the true service of God, the true forms, the true expression of religion, are justice and compassion. But what special sort of justice and compassion? This is the subject of the second characteristic.

Those who are in any degree familiar with the prophetic writings know that the justice and compassion of which they speak are of a markedly *social* type. The Prophets are the spokesmen of the poor. What they look forward to is a state of things in which there will be less inequality than exists in the society around them; not only will all "know" God, but all will be happy, and all—I think I may go so far—will be prosperous. Doubtless the few will be less rich, but many will be less poor. The few will own less land, but many will own more. They desiderate, they even demand, a happiness which shall not merely consist in serenity of soul, in the consciousness of right-doing, in the search for and the communion with God, but also in those external conditions which are not without their effect upon the inner life of the mind and the heart.

This particular type of justice and compassion is reflected in the Law. "Like the teaching of the Prophets, the Law manifests a striking sympathy for the poorer classes, an unflagging respect for their equal humanity. The manhood of the poor was more sacred to it than the property of the rich. . . . [Many] provisions of the Hebrew Law were meant to counteract the separation of the people from the land. It sought to prevent the growth of great estates and a landed aristocracy upon the one side, and the growth of a landless proletariat upon the other. . . . Its regard for the rights of the poor, its

tenderness even for their finer feelings of self-respect, are so noble and humane that we cannot study its social features without a thrill of sympathy and admiration." [1] Both the Prophets and the Law may justly be called "democratic." There is a true sense in which their ideals—or some of their ideals—might, without inaccuracy, if anachronistically, be described, in the familiar words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

Now, if all this be true and unexaggerated, as I believe it to be, what is the moral? Let us think it out very calmly, but fairly, open-eyedly.

Liberal Judaism, like orthodox Judaism, takes no side in party politics. In England, for example, some of its adherents are politically Radicals; others are politically Conservative. I have no doubt that the same phenomenon would hold good in America and in Germany. It is, moreover, not infrequently the case that religious Conservatism goes with political Liberalism, and religious Liberalism with political Conservatism. It would be very unfortunate, I think, for various reasons, if the lines of political cleavage tallied with those of religious cleavage, if, in England, for example, all Liberal Jews were politically Liberal, and all Conservative Jews politically Conservative. For one thing, I am glad to believe that religion and Judaism can sweeten and purify all, or almost all, political opinions. Political Liberalism and political Conservatism may be held selfishly or held unselfishly: by some persons the good of all is sincerely supposed to be better furthered through the domination of the one party, by others through the domination of the other party. Thus Liberal Judaism would seek to include within

[1] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 19-21.

its ranks those who politically have very different opinions and are found in opposite camps.

But whether we are Radicals or Tories, we are all to-day participators in a common democracy. The best Labour men would not deliberately desire to be unjust to the minority of persons who, according to the party tests, are outside the ranks of Labour. The best Tories would not deliberately desire to be unjust to working men. No one professes to-day to care only for his own class or order, though the members of each class too often predicate this of the other, and though the predication is doubtless much too often accurate and true. No one to-day would deliberately say that certain persons with their descendants have any right to be happier and wiser than any other persons, or that opportunities should not, so far as possible, be equal for all.

In that sense, then, the ideals of the Hebrew prophets have won a very general acceptance, whatever the special views of men may be upon land tenure, a capital levy, or the nationalisation of railways and mines.

It will not then evoke opposition from any of its supporters, if, letting others speak for Conservative Judaism, I say of Liberal Judaism that it is a democratic religion. I call it a democratic religion for two main reasons. The first is that it is a priestless religion. It places every one, man or woman, on a footing of equality before God. Each soul should be able to approach him on the same free conditions. Each soul has a right to claim that he counts before God as one—no less and no more. The second reason is that, following its founders and leaders, Liberal Judaism must, I think, regard both the manifestation and the goal of religion as

consisting in social betterment as well as in individual purification. Earthly life is both an end in itself and a preparation for another life. If the one goal is individual, the other is social. Liberal Judaism desires that earth should become a very much better place for the majority of its human inhabitants to live in than at present it is.

And now it is reasonable to go a step further. It is necessary that parents and teachers should gravely call to mind that religions have shown a certain tendency to become identified with the maintenance of things as they are. They require money for their external upkeep—for churches and synagogues—and they have shown a tendency to become ruled by, and closely connected with, the classes and the persons who provide this money which they require. The lay rulers have to some extent set the tone and the tune for the clerical teachers. Alms-giving has been commended, but hardly social reform as a whole. The great reforms have not usually come from the biggest churches. Official religion has tended to become the religion of the comfortable and the well-to-do. So long as the Jews lived in the ghetto amid adversity and persecution, they and their religion were little subjected to these influences. But now in England and in America things are different, and Judaism must beware lest it incline to become the religion of one class rather than of another.

Other causes and influences are tending to the same result. We know that a large number of Russian Jews, transplanted into England and America, are shaking off the beliefs and practices of Conservative Judaism, but are none the more adopting the beliefs and practices of Liberal Judaism.

Why is this? It behoves Liberal Jewish teachers to consider. The fact may be due to many causes, but one cause is the vagueness of the attitude taken up by Liberal Judaism towards social problems and social reform. We must, however, not leave these problems and this reform, outside our Jewish thought, our Jewish activities. We must not regard them even as merely broadly human, and not specifically Jewish. We must not let them be taken hold of by active Christians and stamped as specifically Christian. Still less must we let any body regard them as outside the province of religion. For these problems and this reform, both for the eager poor and the earnest rich, for him who would help and for him who suffers, are the things upon which very many minds are bent and very many hearts are set. And the danger is very real and keen lest Liberal (or Conservative) Judaism be thought to concern itself only with our attitude to the past—to the Bible and the Talmud—or with men's relations to the life after death about which nothing can be known. There is a real danger lest it be thought that Liberal Judaism has no concern with the things about which the hearts of men are palpitating *now*, about the things which make them suffer, or about the things which might make them suffer less, or about the things which cause excitement and tension and the quarrels of class with class. If Judaism is supposed to concern itself only with public worship and the private relations of the individual soul with God, it will tend to lose the interest both of the eager young man who wants to help, and of the big mass of toilers who are face to face with all the economic and social problems that beset us all. Liberal Judaism must, indeed, think of the individual

soul and God, but it must also think of society and God. It must lead men on, and lead men back, from the second to the first. It must remember the kingdom of God upon earth: it must remember the Golden Age that is to be.

Thoughts of this kind have been for some while in my mind, but I must frankly state that I was induced to give expression to them in this chapter by a remarkable book (from which I have already quoted) entitled: *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. The author, Walter Rauschenbusch, Professor of Church History in the Theological Seminary of Rochester, U.S.A., writes, I admit, from the distinctively socialist point of view, but all men, whether socialists or individualists, would, I believe, find his book interesting, suggestive and helpful. Not least should find it so Jewish readers, Jewish teachers and parents, adherents of Liberal Judaism. When Prof. Rauschenbusch writes: "It cannot be denied that there is an increasing alienation between the working class and the churches," let us substitute the word "synagogues" for "churches," and ask how far the sentence is still true, and if it be, how far the causes and the remedies which are suggested for the churches would be accurate and suitable for the synagogues.

Let us substitute Jewish for Christian terms in the following passages and ask how far it still remains valid:—

"The [Synagogue], to have full power over our age, must be the highest expression of the moral and religious truths held by that age. If it lags behind and deals in outgrown conceptions of life and duty, it will lose power over the ablest minds and the young men first, and gradually over all. In our

thought to-day the social problems irresistibly take the lead. If the [Synagogue] has no live and bold thought on this dominant question of modern life, its teaching authority on all other questions will diminish and be despised. It cannot afford to have young men sniff the air as in a stuffy room when they enter the sphere of religious thought. When the world is in travail with a higher ideal of justice, the [Synagogue] dare not ignore it, if it would retain its moral leadership. On the other hand, if the [Synagogue] does incorporate the new social terms in its synthesis of truth, they are certain to throw new light on all the older elements in its teaching." [1]

It must be admitted by those whose religion goes back to, and indeed is largely based upon, the teaching of the Prophets, that social questions have their religious side, and that religion cannot stop short outside them. The problems of individualism and socialism may not be for the religious teacher to solve. But the end which the advocates of individualism say can best be approached by individualism, and which the advocates of socialism say can best be approached by socialism, is also the goal of the Prophets: it is the demand of religion. For that end is better conditions, fuller well-being, wider opportunities, for all the children of men. It is, in other words, the realisation of justice and compassion; the accomplishment of the Prophets' dream.

For what, after all, is to be the content of the Golden or Messianic Age? It is no good to vapour

[1] *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 329, 339. One of my critics aptly reminds me that Dr. Stephen Wise in his addresses before the Jewish Religious Union took very much Prof. Rauschenbusch's line.

about the time when peace shall be supreme, and tears shall be dried, and oppression shall be no more. The question is, what do we really mean by such a time, how far can man help to the drying of tears and to the end of oppression? We must translate the terms of the Prophets into their modern equivalents; we must translate them into terms which have a relation to actual life and to present endeavour. If we so translate them, will not the Golden Epoch—the Messianic Era—denote a time when (in addition to much else) to the upright and honourable worker outward conditions will never prevent the attainment of knowledge or happiness, when there will be no sweating or shockingly inadequate wages, and when, so far as possible, there will be equal opportunities for all? Is not something like this the modern equivalent of each man sitting under his vine or his fig tree and no one making him afraid? How we may best and most safely approximate to such ideals is another question on which opinions will for long widely vary.

But the ideals themselves seem to form at least a part both of the prophets' Golden Age and of the Golden Age which might be depicted by any democrat to-day. And if, with the doctrine, the prophetic interpretation of the Golden Age or of the Kingdom of God be also accepted by Liberal Judaism, then we may say that the ideals of democracy are included in the ideals of our religion. They are transcended, they are purified; they may be even transfigured with a higher or more individual righteousness, but they are not excluded. They are included. They are to be reckoned with; they are to be worked for; they are to be prayed for. They are part of the Golden Age; they are part of the Kingdom of

God. Religion is very much more than good air, good water, good drains, good food, good wages, but, seeing that religion demands and desires that every one should lead the fullest life for which his natural endowments fit him, and seeing that such a life should rest upon, and start from, all these things as its basis, religion should, as it were, include them all.

If, then, what I have so far said is valid and true, it follows that the social worker cuts himself off from the finest stimulus and hope both for himself and his fellows when he neglects, or drops off from, religion. It also follows that the Synagogues and the Churches must seek to speak a word on social questions, and lend a hand in social work. These questions and this work are not outside their province, but within it. Religion must keep close to "life," but "life" must be interfused with religion. The working classes in the narrow and unsatisfactory sense (meaning mainly those who labour with their hands), and the social reformers of all shades of individualist or socialist opinion, must be made to feel that they can gain great strength by religion, just as religion can gain great strength from them. Liberal Judaism needs us all—the rich and the poor; the worker with his hands and the worker with his brain; the "lower" class, the "middle" class, the "upper" class. It needs them all. But it has something to say to them all. It has to remind them of their equality before God; it has to make them social instead of selfish, desirous for the good of all, instead of seeking the good of their own particular class. And it has something to *give* to them all—a common bond and a common strength; a common hope and a common faith. Liberal Judaism must ultimately

come by its own, which is at least nothing less than all those who are born Jews, but all Jews must ultimately come by *their* own, which is at least nothing less than the depth and fullness of religion —the worship and the love of God.

CHAPTER XVIII

OF CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL JUDAISM

This chapter and the five which succeed it seem to explain themselves, and scarcely need, I think, either preface or introduction. They are avowedly written for parents and teachers, and it will be for them to decide what portions of them, in what form and dilution, and at what particular stage of child development, to bring before their children. One point only I would venture to reiterate. It is that the body of teaching presented in this book is a whole, and that though it need not all be given at one stage or time, it is unnecessary and undesirable to give to the child, at any stage and at any time, teaching which conflicts with it. Liberal Judaism need not be presented in its entirety to the young child, and it need not be presented in the same form to the young child as to the older child. But my contention and belief remain that it should be always Liberal Judaism which should be administered to the child (whatever its age) which is born of Liberal Jewish parents, and which is to be brought up to become a Liberal Jew. He is not to be taught one Judaism as a child, and then, off his own bat, to acquire another. Conservative Judaism does not (as I have already tried to show) turn into Liberal Judaism by shrinkage. If you take two objects which are allied but not alike (e.g. a round box and a square box), and chip off pieces, or

compress them, you do not turn the one into the other. You simply make each object smaller, or rather, you simply produce a truncated specimen of each. Chip off bits from Conservative Judaism, and you may obtain a truncated Conservative Judaism, but you will not obtain Liberal Judaism. Hence Liberal Judaism, like Conservative Judaism, must be taught and must grow from the beginning. It is for the skilful teacher and parent to show exactly how, but the "how" cannot be by planting one sort of seed and expecting a different flower.

THIS book is written for teachers and parents who hold to that form of the Jewish religion which is called Liberal Judaism. The term is not wholly a happy one, for the word *Liberal* is used in so many other senses. Liberal Judaism does not mean a Judaism the upholders of, or believers in, which are more *generous* than those who profess any other kind of Judaism. It has nothing whatever to do with party politics. There may be Liberal Jews who, as I have already said, in politics are Conservatives, and there may be Conservative Jews who in politics are Liberal. Another word for the same thing, which "liberal" has now largely displaced, was "reform" or "reformed." But "reform" or "reformed Judaism," has objections as a title into which I need not enter. It suggests a "reform" or modification of details rather than a fresh presentation of the religion as a whole.

Liberal Judaism stands in opposition to, or in contrast with, what is often called Traditional or Orthodox or Conservative Judaism. The nomenclature, from our liberal point of view, is by no means a very happy one. For in a certain sense Liberal Judaism is traditional too; only Liberal Jews desire

to carry the tradition forward and onward. *Which* Judaism is *orthodox* is exactly the question in dispute; whose opinion or faith is right, or in the right, is precisely the point which the future has to decide.

But whatever the names which should most fitly be adopted, there are, at any rate, two main forms of Judaism which exist to-day, two main forms opposed to each other. Yet because these two forms are in some respects opposed to each other, this does not mean that they have not *also* very much in common. And this is, indeed, the fact.

I am inclined to think that of the chapters in this book which deal with the nature of God and of his relation to man, *most* would be passed, with slight differences in detail and stress here and there, by Conservative as well as by Liberal Jews. The doctrines of human progress and of Immortality would be held by both alike. The doctrines of prayer and of the service of God by man would be in large measure the same. The mission of Israel is championed by both, though there would be certain differences in application and detail. I do not know that there would be important differences as regards sin and forgiveness and repentance and punishment and reward. To both Conservative and Liberal Jews God is King and Father; for both he enters into relations with man, and helps him to goodness and the new heart.

The differences come in regard to the questions of miracles, of inspiration, of the Bible and the Pentateuchal law. The differences are doubtless large and important, but the agreements are very much larger and more important still. What is contained in the noun (Judaism) is larger and more important than what is contained in the adjectives

(Liberal, Conservative). Hence the bonds of union which keep together Liberal and Conservative are larger, more important and no less distinctive than the teachings which are at issue between them.

And before going further, there is another point which I desire to make. It is often represented by our Conservative opponents as if Liberal Judaism were all negation; as if, at least when it differed from Conservative Judaism, it differed merely to deny. Our opponents speak as if Liberal Judaism were nothing but Conservative Judaism with seven-eighths of Judaism cut off. This is, however, a misrepresentation and a mistake. It is true that Liberal Judaism denies certain doctrines of Conservative Judaism, but these denials are merely the obverse, so to speak, of large and important affirmations.

If we differ from Conservative Judaism, for example, as regards the miracles recorded in the Bible, as regards the doctrine of inspiration, as regards the perpetual validity and authority of the ceremonial law, this is *because of*, or this has *led up to*, positive doctrines, no less important and definite, and (as we believe) nobler and truer, than the doctrines held by our Conservative opponents. Indeed Liberal Jews are, on the whole, more disposed than Conservative Jews to regard a consistent body of doctrine—a systematic theology—as necessary and important. Liberal Judaism is, therefore, quite as positive and affirmative as Conservative Judaism: its own affirmations are as essential to it as other affirmations are essential to Conservative Judaism, its rival.

In one sense alone would it be right to say that Liberal Judaism is less dogmatic than one form at least of Conservative Judaism, and that form the

truer and the better form. For there *is* a form of Conservative Judaism which was started in the nineteenth century, and has had, and still has, a considerable vogue. It likes to call itself *Historical* Judaism, and is even more fiercely opposed to Liberal Judaism than the true old Conservative Judaism from which it sprang. Historical Judaism declares that Liberal Judaism has no connection with history, that it is un-Jewish, that it has cut itself off from the past, and that it is a mere vague Theism which will soon entirely lose its slight Jewish veneer. So far as its own beliefs are concerned, Historical Judaism lays stress, it tells us, upon action and not upon belief, upon conduct and not upon dogma. The thoughts of man cannot be bound: his actions can. The unity between Jews must be one not of beliefs, but of observance. In the ceremonial Law resides the essence of Judaism, and the Jew is he who observes its enactments. Of miracles, of the date of the Pentateuch, of inspiration and the origin of the Law, one man will believe this and another that, but both alike can and should observe the Law, and in that common observance lie the common bond and the common Judaism.

Liberal Judaism is strongly opposed to this conception. It holds that faith and action, belief and observance, must form a unity. Religious observance must express and manifest religious faith. There must be a correspondence between them. Observances which run counter to faith, which violate a cherished belief, or which are not based upon belief, have no religious value any longer.

On the other hand, Liberal Judaism, while keen on its religious affirmations and doctrines, is opposed to the formation of dogmatic creeds. It would not

attempt or desire to substitute in its prayer-books another creed for that which is found in all the orthodox prayer-books to-day. We do not claim to have reached perfection and finality in the development of Judaism. We can well believe that the teachings of Liberal Judaism in 2023 will not be wholly the same as the teachings of Liberal Judaism in 1923. We trust that the later teachings will be better and truer. But none the less do we profess and cherish the teachings of our religion to-day.

Again, in the details and in the implications of these teachings there is room for individual variety. We ask for no dogmatic fixity, for no hard and fast determinations. Within a certain measure of definiteness and agreement there must be room for diversity and for development. We possess a bond of union in our common faith, and yet we also possess a right measure of freedom, with an absence of rigid dogmatic chains.

I have alluded to the thirteen articles of creed, or as they are also called in the authorised Prayer-book, the thirteen "principles of the faith." They were formulated by Maimonides, and are therefore now more than eight hundred years old. It may be convenient to run through them briefly, and to see where Liberal Judaism is in agreement with, and where it differs from them.

But this much must be premised at the outset. The articles leave out, or are silent about, many "articles of faith" which Liberal Judaism regards as essential. If, therefore, we reject some of the thirteen, this does not mean that our Judaism is confined to the remainder, for, in the first place, our rejections (as we shall see) will mean *substitutions*, and in the second place, we shall ask for *additions*.

1. "The Creator is the Author and Guide of everything which has been created, and he alone has made, does make and will make all things."

This first article plunges, as it were, into the thick of things, and deals at once with a particular controversy. The Articles do not deal with the *existence* of God and, above all, they are silent as to his moral perfection and his omnipresence. The controversy, to which the first article alludes, is the so-called *creatio ex nihilo*. If God has made *all* things, then he made *some* things from *no* thing. Liberal Judaism takes no side in this controversy. Whether God is the "creator" of "matter," and in what sense he is the "creator" of the material universe, we do not know, and we do not ask faith to take up any particular attitude upon the subject. We are more keen on God's *ruling* than on his *making*: God the Guide is more to us than God the Creator—so far as the world of matter is concerned. That God is the source of life, and above all of the human soul, that he is the origin of goodness and of knowledge—upon this (as we have already seen) Liberal Judaism lays stress. If *we* drew up articles, it is this point to which attention would be called.

2. "The Creator is a Unity and there is no Unity in any manner like unto his, and he alone is our God, who was, is, and will be."

Liberal Judaism is in full accord with this article.

3. "The Creator is not a body, and he is free from all the accidents of matter, and he has not any form whatsoever."

We agree. Only we should prefer to put the truth positively rather than negatively, and to say that God is Spirit.

4. "The Creator is the first and the last."

This article means that God is eternal in both directions. Agreed.

5. " To the Creator and to him alone it is right to pray, and it is not right to pray to any being besides him."

The controversial direction of this article is obvious. But we agree with it.

The Articles now pass from the doctrine of God and go on to the Bible. They leave, as I have already said, much out which ought to be in. The relations of God to man, the divine spirit within man, the help rendered by God to man, are ignored. They would have to form important articles in the Liberal Jewish faith.

6. " All the words of the prophets are true."

We too should have an article upon inspiration. But we could not honestly declare that *all* the words of the prophets, by which Maimonides means the written words of the Hebrew prophets in the Bible, are " true." This would imply that *all* the words were *perfectly* good and *perfectly* accurate. Our reason and conscience, when we study *all* the words of the prophets carefully, do not allow us to believe this.

7. " The prophecy of Moses was true, and he was the chief of the prophets, both of those that preceded and of those that followed him."

Similar criticism must be allotted to this as to the preceding article. Moses was doubtless a teacher, and in that sense a prophet, but we should not care to affirm that his inspiration was greater than the inspiration of Isaiah. Moreover, most of the words put into the mouth of Moses are much later than the Mosaic age. We therefore reject this article.

8. "The whole Law now found in our possession is the same that was given to Moses."

Does this refer to the so-called Oral Law *as well as* to the Pentateuch? In either case we must unhesitatingly reject it. Most of the Pentateuchal Law is much later than Moses, while the Oral Law is much later still.

9. "This Law will not be changed, and there will never be any other Law from the Creator."

The allusion to Christianity is obvious. In the sense that we do not believe that Christianity *supplanted* Judaism, that Judaism, since the rise of Christianity, is obsolete, and that it has no more religious work to do, this article can be accepted. The *form* which *we* should give to it would, however, be very different.

10. "The Creator knows every deed of the children of men and all their thoughts."

This article seems misplaced. It should surely come among those which deal with the *general* doctrine of God and of his relations to man. But, in any case, the divine omniscience, however difficult to understand and realise, must be accepted by Liberals as well as by Conservatives. The divine perfection must be equal to the immensity of its burden.

11. "The Creator rewards those that keep his commandments, and punishes those that transgress them."

Liberal Judaism would accept this article, interpreting the meaning of punishment and reward in a spiritual sense, as indeed Maimonides himself was wont to do.

12. "The Messiah, though he tarry, will surely come."

The personal Messiah, by which I suppose is

meant a descendant of David, who will bring the Jews back again to Palestine, and reign over them, as their King, for a long while, is not believed in, or looked forward to, by Liberal Judaism. This article is, therefore, rejected, but we should substitute for it an article about the Messianic hope and human progress.

13. "There will be a resurrection of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator."

In the form in which this article is composed, we cannot accept it. For it refers to a simultaneous and *bodily* resurrection of all dead persons at a particular moment of the future. We do not believe in such a doctrine. But we should substitute for this article another which would express our faith in the "immortality of the soul."

In addition to its omissions concerning the relation of God to man, the creed is also silent about the mission of Israel and the relation of Judaism to the world at large. It is silent about the salvation of all men, of the ultimate redemption and enlightenment of the bad as well as the good. It omits other important matters too, such as the relation of religion to morality, the true service of God, the relation of faith to works, and of both to religion, the place of knowledge in religion, and so on. It might be difficult, just as it certainly would be undesirable, to draw up articles about these matters, but they are none the less profoundly important, and Liberal Judaism has important and definite pronouncements to make about all of them. Thus no one can fail to realise that Liberal Judaism has a content, a body, a series of affirmative doctrines, as rich, as large and as important, as those of Conservative Judaism. It is no less positive than its rival.

We have seen that Liberal Judaism differs from Conservative Judaism in doctrine. This difference of doctrine brings with it a difference in outward form. But on these mere external differences this is not the place to dwell. I mean by external differences, such questions as the use of the vernacular in public worship, the introduction of an organ, the sitting together of men and women, the uncovered head, and so on. All these external differences depend on different conceptions concerning the origin, place and value of the Pentateuchal and Rabbinic Law, and concerning the permanent authority of customs.

But they also depend upon certain hopes for the future, upon certain aims and ideals, in which the one form of Judaism differs from the other. And, once more, they depend upon our conceptions of the relation in Judaism of race to religion, of the relation of the Jews to the countries where, and the peoples among whom, they dwell. For here too most Liberals differ from most Conservatives. Of these hopes and ideals and relations it will be my duty to speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

OF NATION AND RACE IN RELATION TO THE JEWISH RELIGION

In this chapter I touch upon matters of acute controversy. I hope I have touched upon them without acerbity. Modern Jewish Nationalism is a younger growth than Liberal Judaism, though doubtless it is connected with, and can trace its descent from, the Jewish Nationalism of the past. As to its future it would be rash and unbecoming to predict. But though there are some Liberal Jews who are Nationalists in one sense or another, the number is, I believe, extremely small. The larger group of Nationalists is undoubtedly hostile to Liberalism. And this seems to me only natural. For the aspirations of most Nationalist Jews run counter to the aspirations of most Liberal Jews. To our hopes and desires both for Judaism and for the Jews, the ideals of most Nationalist Jews are opposed. On the other hand, to their hopes and desires our ideals are, in their turn, no less definitely hostile.

Before the boy or girl reaches the age of sixteen, I would tell them much about the matters discussed in this chapter. Before they reach the age of sixteen I want them to be ardent lovers of England and ardent lovers of Liberal Judaism. The subject of cleavage between most Liberal Jews and Jewish Nationalists is of extreme importance. Charity and toleration are always desirable

and necessary. But seeing that Jewish Nationalists consider that the future welfare and prosperity both of Judaism and the Jews depend upon ideas which most Liberal Jews consider false, and upon a policy the success of which most Liberal Jews consider would be disastrous, and that precisely the same thing is true of Jewish Nationalists in their estimate of the ideas and policy of Liberal Jews, it is clear that upon this subject men's minds must be deeply stirred, and their emotions heavily charged with somewhat dangerous electricity. As a Liberal Jew I regard right teaching about it as one of the most important and urgent matters that could possibly engage the attention of both parent and teacher. Nevertheless, I hope that I have written without undue heat and without unfairness.

We speak of Buddhism, but we do not speak of the Buddhist race. We speak of Christianity, but we cannot speak of the Christian race. We speak of Mahommedanism, but we cannot speak of the Mahommedan race. Why is this? The answer is obvious: It is because the Buddhist, Christian, and Mahommedan religions are spread over *many* races. Each of these religions began—as every religion must—among *one* race, but it soon became diffused among many races. The three religions just mentioned, because they count many races among their adherents, and because they desire to count many or even all races as their adherents, are rightly known as *universal* religions.

We speak, however, not only of Judaism, but also of the Jewish race. Why is this? Is Judaism *not* a universal religion? The answer to that last question is not wholly easy to give.

Judaism was in old times the religion of the

Jewish people neither more nor less. This is acknowledged on all hands. It was a national religion. Now a national religion is one which has national gods and a national worship. In ancient times, as we know, men believed in many gods; the gods of one nation were not the gods of another. I have explained all this in a form suitable, as I believe, for parents to put before their children, in the first few chapters of the present book. If, however, a race of people begins to believe that there is only one God, how can there be a national religion any more? A national religion—which by its very definition implies special gods for a special nation—has then become an inconsistency and an anachronism. A national religion with one universal God could only mean a religion in which the one God was supposed to care specially for, or to show partial regard to, the members of one particular race. A national religion with a universal God is in some respects a worse religion than a national religion with its special and national gods.

And a national religion in this sense Judaism unquestionably is not. Neither in its Conservative nor its Liberal form does Judaism hold that God cares specially for, or shows partial regard to, the Jews. This divine partiality was indeed a trouble from which Judaism suffered in the past. But, as I have said in earlier chapters, the trouble has been completely got over. No Jew believes that the divine Father shows partiality, or that he cares for one set of his children more than for another.

On the other hand, though Judaism is not a national religion in the only right and true sense in which a monotheistic religion can justly be called a national religion, in the sense, that is, that the one

God is partial, it may perhaps be called a national religion *de facto* though not *de jure*, and it may be called a national religion in a secondary sense for two special reasons.

Why, to begin with, a national religion *de facto*? Well, because, as a matter of fact, the Jewish religion is almost entirely confined to the Jewish race. We may deeply deplore the fact, but a fact is none the less a fact because we deplore it. The Jewish race —scholars have shown—is in all probability not a pure race. It has received numerous infiltrations from outside. Numerous proselytes to the religion have been, as it were, adopted into the race. Nevertheless, we can still speak of the Jewish race, even though it is not a pure race. We can still speak of the Jewish race, though many of us may hold that we cannot and should not speak of the Jewish nation.

This, then, is the reason why, *de facto*, Judaism may still be called—however much we may deplore it—a national religion. It has, men say, no adherents outside the Jewish race; and if a proselyte joins it, he or his children become absorbed into that race.

Next, what are the two reasons because of which Judaism, in a secondary sense, may be called a national religion?

The first reason is that though Judaism is emphatically a monotheistic religion, and though it believes in, and stands for, an impartial God, its outward form, its ceremonial, appears to wear a markedly national hue. It wears such a markedly national hue more especially among Conservatives, but to some extent also among Liberals. For instance, the Passover is, at first sight, a purely national festival.

Secondly—and the second reason is more important than the first—the One God is still, many persons would say, in some special sense, the God of Israel; Israel is, in some special sense, his peculiar or chosen people. God has special relations with Israel. The divine partiality, chased out of one window, seems to come back through another.

What are we to say to this? It does seem to me that, in the ordinary liturgy, traces of the old false national conception remain. And one of the duties of Liberal Judaism is so to modify the old liturgy that, without losing its historic character, all traces of the partial God, of the God who cares for, or thinks of, or values, Israel more than other races may be expunged.

But—it may be urged—the doctrine of the peculiar or chosen people is not limited to Conservative Judaism. It is also strongly maintained by Liberals. They, too, hold that God has special relations with Israel, that the Jews have a special religious vocation or mission. Does not this mean partiality? Does it not mean a national religion of an anachronistic and obsolete type?

Surely not. We hold that the special relations with Israel are not specifically for the sake of Israel, but for the sake of the world, for the sake of true religion. Certainly the special relations have never resulted in external prosperity. They have resulted in trouble and persecution and suffering, and for the majority of the Jewish race they still so result. It has been an election to sorrow and pain; a vocation to suffering and privation and woe.

Thus the "mission of Israel" which is the only apparently national feature in Liberal-Jewish doctrine is, when rightly explained, not a national feature at

all. It is a religious doctrine pure and simple, and a religious doctrine which looks outward, not inward, which thinks of others as the end and of Israel as the means.

And so if the Jews, passing out of the limited national phase, are to regard themselves, as most (I do not say all) Liberal Jews think they should regard themselves, not as a people, not as a nation, not even as a race, but as a religious brotherhood, a religious community or denomination, then Judaism is in all respects a universal and not a national religion. Its doctrine is universal: the mission of Israel becomes the mission of a brotherhood, no longer the mission of a race. The bond which holds them together is the bond of religion.

But how then of the worship, the ceremonial, the outward form? In this book I cannot go into details, but I have elsewhere shown that there need be nothing purely national in the outward form or ceremonial. The Sabbath is not national: it is not even national because it is celebrated on the seventh day. The Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement are not national. Tabernacles is not really a national festival, and need not be nationally interpreted. Of Pentecost, whether it be regarded as a nature festival (in its Biblical form), or as the festival of Law (in its Rabbinical form), the same may be said. There remains the Passover, and I believe it to be quite possible for the human and religious aspects of the Passover to dominate and overshadow the purely national aspect of that ancient and picturesque festival.

But it may be, and indeed it often is said, that the Jews show by their actions that they regard themselves as a separate race or nation. For why do

they only marry among themselves, and why, if one of them breaks away from that rule, do the others deplore it?

It is most important that parents and teachers should know the right attitude to take up as regards this vexed question of intermarriage. It is most important that Liberal Judaism should speak out here with no uncertain note. It is most important that it should be widely known, recognised and realised that, on this question of intermarriage or of mixed marriages, Liberal and Conservative Judaism are practically at one.

Liberal Judaism accepts the reproach. It is opposed to mixed marriages. But why? For purely religious reasons. For the same reasons which used, at any rate, to make the Quakers object to mixed marriages, and which still influence Roman Catholics. For the reason of the divine mission of Israel, which, as we believe, can only be carried out by the continued existence of the Jewish brotherhood. But the Jews are a small minority living amid huge majorities. If they contract mixed marriages, they must inevitably die out and disappear. But what would be fatal for the whole suggests a law for the part. Each individual unit must not act in a way which, if imitated by all, would end in self-destruction. There is here nothing of national pride or of racial distinctiveness. The reason is a purely religious reason. Indeed, it should only be a very big thing, such as religion, which should be a valid bar to love. And, as we know, the law forbidding a mixed marriage is often a barrier to the satisfaction of love.

Liberal Judaism, of the type which I seek to profess and teach, cares nothing for race. If the

woman whom the Jew, if the man whom the Jewess, desire to marry can conscientiously accept the Jewish religion and enter the Jewish brotherhood, the door is open, and the path is made smooth. The rite of total immersion which Conservative Judaism exacts of the woman, the rites of total immersion and of circumcision which it exacts of the man, are not demanded by most exponents of Liberal Judaism. A reasoned profession of faith, a genuine promise of fidelity — these are considered adequate and sufficient.

And what now of the distant goal? It is impertinent and impossible to predict the future, but this much I would say, that Liberal Judaism looks forward to a time when the Jewish brotherhood may be less closely limited to the Jewish race. It looks forward to the wide diffusion of the Jewish religion.

But does not Conservative Judaism share the same hope and look forward to the same goal? In a certain sense it does. But in a certain sense only.

Conservative Judaism looks forward to the ultimate triumph of the Jewish conceptions of God and of his relation to the world. The Jewish doctrines are for the world; but the outward embodiment of these doctrines, the worship, the ceremonial, are for the Jews alone. These *are* national, and are to remain national. Thus the world is to receive doctrines, but doctrines without form, teachings without ceremonial, a religion without a cult. These it must, I suppose, supply for itself. And meanwhile Conservative Judaism does little to make the world better acquainted with the doctrines which are ultimately to be the world's doctrines. They are

enshrined in a national ceremonial; they are hidden away in a national, or at any rate a dead and difficult, language from the ken and understanding of the Gentile.

Liberal Judaism perceives and realises that doctrines require ceremonials, and that religions are composed of inward conceptions and outward forms. It seeks gradually to wed its form to its doctrine, so that both may be acceptable to, and understood by, its own adherents first and foremost, and then acceptable to, and understood by, all those who choose to enter and to see. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations unrestrained; lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break on the right hand and on the left." This was the prophetic hope, and this is the renewed hope of Liberal Judaism. "Strengthen thy stakes," yea, verily, and first of all; but "lengthen thy cords" too, "enlarge the place of thy tent."

The reader will realise, I hope, the extreme brevity—almost the scrappiness—with which it has been necessary to dwell upon topics large, important and complicated. No less must be the brevity with which I must dwell upon another aspect of the same root question, and one even more delicate and more controversial, because relating not to the distant future, but to the present day.

There is such a thing, it has to be admitted, as the Jewish race. Some of us may regard the fact as *to us* a fact of no religious importance: it may mean to us religiously nothing. We think only of the Jewish religious brotherhood: the men and women who profess a particular religious faith. But the fact remains: there is such a thing as the Jewish

race. It is a very real fact to some Jews, and indeed there are some Jews who seem far prouder of belonging to the Jewish race than of belonging to the Jewish religion. There are some Jews who seem to care for the Jewish race much more than they care for the Jewish religion. There are some Jews who seem to believe in the Jewish race much more than they believe in the Jewish religion.

But we have to go a step further. There are some Jews who would speak not only of a Jewish race, but also of a Jewish people. We should all admit that there was a Jewish people when there was a Jewish state, even when, as practically was the case from 596 B.C., and even earlier, to A.D. 72, the Jews were the tributaries and the vassals, and their country a mere province and portion, of the empires of Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, Egypt, Syria and Rome. But some would claim that there is a Jewish people to-day.

Liberal Judaism (though the statement would not be true of all its forms and phases) denies that the Jews are a people. Liberal Jews want, as regards all else than *religion*, to be one with the nations among whom they dwell. When an English Liberal Jew speaks of "my people," he means the English people; when an American Liberal Jew speaks of "my people" and "my country," he means the people and the country of the United States.

The Nationalist Jews, when they speak of "my people," mean, not the English people, but the Jews; yet they claim to be good English patriots none the less. I have no doubt that they are. Whether they are theoretically consistent does not much matter. That question can be allowed to rest. They say that the Jews are a people who at present happen to

be deprived of their own land or of any land. And what these Nationalist Jews would like is to make the Jews once more a people with a land of their own; even as in our own day the Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Serbians have become a people in and with a land of their own, the land of their forefathers.

Now this is not the place in which a full and fair discussion of Zionism or Nationalism can be attempted. I will only say this. Almost all Nationalist Jews or adherents of Zionism (but not *all* such) are opposed to Liberal Judaism, and almost all Liberal Jews (but not *all*) are (like myself) opposed to Nationalism and Zionism. The reason is clear. Liberal Judaism believes in, and aims at, a universal Judaism, universal both in doctrine and in form. Liberal Judaism holds that a *national* religion is an absurdity, or, at all events, an anachronism. Just as Buddhism, Christianity, and Mahommedanism have adherents of many races, and by this very fact have shown their universality, so must it ultimately be with Judaism. The one universal God cannot fitly be worshipped by a national cult. The national ceremonial has become too narrow for the universal God. The clothes do not fit the religion. Moreover, the national references do not fit in with the consciousness of the worshipper. If the English Liberal Jew had to compress his religion in the straitjacket of national forms, those forms should be English. Thus, whichever way one looks at it, a national religion, whether in cult or creed, becomes to the Liberal Jew an obsolete and outworn conception, from which his faith must gradually be more and more completely divested and freed. It is so freed as regards its doctrines; it must be gradually so freed as regards its forms.

But it should be stated frankly and fairly that all Liberal Jews do not see eye to eye with the present writer in this matter. One of the best and noblest Liberal Jews whom the author knows is also a Nationalist. There are two kinds of Jewish Nationalists. The one kind cares little or nothing for religion. Of this kind I have here nothing to say. But I fear that the men who compose it constitute a large section of the Nationalist ranks. Then there are others who do care for religion and for Judaism, and who (however hard it may be for those who think as I think to understand it) are Nationalists *for the sake of* their religion. And though most of these belong to Conservative Judaism, as is indeed only natural (though there are thousands upon thousands of Conservative Jews who are opposed to Nationalism), some of them are Liberals. I hope that one day the friend of whom I have just spoken will fully explain his position in a book. Meanwhile—in the absence of his book—the clearest and briefest statement of the position of such Liberal Jewish Nationalists (which I happen to know) has been given by Mr. Israel Abrahams in his wonderful little book called *Judaism*.[1] It is fair to my dear and saintly friend, and to those who think with him, to append what Mr. Abrahams says in this place:—

"The national, as contrasted with the universal aspect of Judaism is on the wane. Many Jewish liturgies have, for instance, eliminated the prayers for the restoration of sacrifices; and several have removed or spiritualised the petitions for the recovery of the Jewish nationality. Modern reformed Judaism is a universalistic Judaism. It lays stress on the function of Israel, the Servant, as a 'Light

[1] It was published by Messrs. Constable & Co. in 1910 at 1s.

to the nations.' It tends to eliminate those ceremonies and beliefs which are less compatible with a universal than with a racial religion. Modern Zionism is not a real reaction against this tendency. For Zionism is either non-religious or, if religious, brings to the front what has always been a corrective to the nationalism of Orthodox Judaism. For the separation of Israel has ever been a means to an end; never an end in itself. Often the end has been forgotten in the means, but never for long. The end of Israel's separateness is the good of the world. And the religious as distinct from the merely political Zionist, who thinks that Judaism would gain by a return to Palestine, is just the one who also thinks that the return is a necessary preliminary to the Messianic age, when all men shall flow unto Zion and seek God there. Reformed Jews would have to be Zionists also in this sense, were it not that many of them no longer share the belief in the national aspects of the prophecies as to Israel's future. These may believe that the world may become full of the knowledge of God without any antecedent withdrawal of Israel from the world" (*Judaism*, p. 44).

So far Mr. Abrahams. The bulk of Liberal Jews do indeed believe that "the world may become full of the knowledge of God without any antecedent withdrawal of Israel from the world." Nay, it is rather through Israel living in the world, through its members being scattered among the nations, and becoming one with them in their national life, that we think that Israel can best help in the diffusion of that knowledge.

It may, perhaps, be asked whether Liberal Judaism, as the writer conceives it, has anything to say as to the actual working out or manifestation

of Zionism in Palestine to-day. It is undesirable to enter into controversial details, but this much, perhaps, may reasonably be said. So far as Palestine may provide a happy home for a small fraction of those Jews who at present are unhappy and persecuted, who can be so churlish as not to be pleased that this fraction should be prosperous and contented instead of miserable and ill at ease? Again, so far as Jews are to help in the building up of a new nation which is to be Palestinian and not Jewish, composed of many religions and several races, all with equal civil and political and religious rights, there can be, from the Liberal Jewish point of view, no objection. But the Liberal Jew fears that a large number of Zionists and Jewish Nationalists desire more than this. They hope that the number of Jews will so increase in Palestine, in comparison with the number of Mahommedans and Christians, that the new Palestinian nation will gradually become a Jewish nation. It will become a Jewish nation in two senses. It will be Jewish in the sense that it is not illegitimate to speak of England or Denmark as a Christian nation, because the vast majority of its citizens are Christians. But it will also (as these Zionists hold) be Jewish, because there is such a thing (and to them it is a good and valuable and desired and desirable thing) as a Jewish nationality, and if the large majority of the citizens of Palestine are Jews, then the Palestinian nation will be a Jewish nation, not merely because of religion, but also because of nationality. Palestine will become a misnomer. The true name will be Judaea, for you would have there a Jewish nation, just as much as you have in Denmark a Danish nation, and for the same reasons, which are

independent of religion. Now this result, towards which the Zionists are aiming, would, I think, be a calamity for Liberal Judaism, and, parenthetically, I would add, a calamity for Jews. It is this result which those Jews who, opposed to Zionism, are yet helping in the establishment and development of the "national home," are possibly helping to bring about. They are very possibly helping to cook Zionist chestnuts for the benefit of the Zionists. Thus they are playing a dangerous game; they are playing with a dangerous fire. Why do I say that this result would be a calamity for Jews? Because the more the idea is stressed that the Jews constitute a separate "people" or have a nationality of their own, the more difficult becomes their demand for equal rights in the countries in which they live, the greater is the handle which they present for the attacks of their antagonists. I will not develop this danger further because I am concerned with Liberal Judaism, and not with the Jews, but it is a terribly real danger. Even as things now are, the efforts of those who are always fighting the cause of Jewish emancipation and equal rights, and combating the strenuous labours of the Anti-Semites, are sadly handicapped by the doings and sayings of the Jewish Nationalists. And the attempt to establish a Jewish nation in Palestine, and the very existence of a "national home"—those most unfortunate and ill-chosen words which, say what you will, do seem to indicate that the Jews are, or desire to be, a nation, in the same sense as the Danes or the Bulgarians—keep the sore open, and maintain the arguments of the Anti-Semites on the one hand, and the wishes and hopes of the Jewish Nationalists upon the other. For Liberal Judaism the danger is very real likewise.

For, in my opinion, Liberal Judaism entirely depends upon the view that the Jews are not a people or a nation like the Danes, but a religious community. And not only this. Liberal Judaism desires to be, and aims at being, a universal religion. Israel was chosen for religious service, and for no other reason. Liberal Judaism can only flourish where the Jews feel themselves to have no other interests as Jews than religious interests. A Jew for Liberal Judaism is a man who professes certain religious beliefs, and belongs to, or joins, the religious community of Israel. A proselyte is just as much a Jew as a man who could trace his descent back to Maimonides or Akiba. Jewish Nationalism will be mainly recruited from two sources : (1) Jews (by birth) who have no religious belief at all, and who, from my point of view, are no more Jews than an atheist could be called a Christian ; (2) such Orthodox Jews for whom the Jewish religion is still, in some real, valid and believed sense, a national religion, and for whom the Jews do not merely constitute a religious community and nothing more. Liberal Judaism will not flourish for long in a "Nationalist" environment, and will never develop in it. Liberal Judaism and Jewish Nationalism (as I see things) are hopelessly incompatible and inconsistent with each other, and it is not to be wondered at that, for the most part, Jewish Nationalists and Zionists are opposed to Liberal Judaism, and that Liberal Jews are opposed to Zionism and Nationalism. I have throughout admitted that my views are not shared by some Liberal Jews, but I believe that these Liberal Jews are in a minority.

One further remark about this subject. We Liberal Jews still refuse to become, as Dr. Herzl

told me that he became, Nationalists through despair. For some believe that the dislike of the Jew is so rooted in the non-Jew that the former will *always* be persecuted, oppressed, or at any rate disliked and despised. They believe that the only remedy for such secular oppression and dislike (constantly breaking out in fresh phases and forms) is for the large bulk of the Jews to be segregated to themselves in a country of their own. It is, I admit, easy for an English Jew who lives in comfort, liberty and toleration, who has never felt his Judaism the tiniest difficulty, but who, on the contrary (quite apart from any spiritual or religious considerations), has been helped by it on more than one occasion—it is easy for such a Jew to put forward the specious plea that he does not think so basely of human nature; it is easy for such an one to combat the doctrine of despair. I admit that; I feel that. And yet I must combat this doctrine of despair, however much I lay myself open to the charge of indifference, or to the charge of clinging to outworn ideals of the emancipation era, or to the charge that there are none so blind as those who will not see.

I still hold that we must and should cling to the ideals of the emancipation era, to the universalistic ideals of Liberal Judaism. I still believe that what has happened in England can happen even in Poland. The night is long, but it may be—I, for my part, believe that it is—the divine will that at last the dawn will come, the dawn of liberty and of enlightenment, the dawn of peace and of good-will.

CHAPTER XX

OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

The present chapter may be of use to parents and teachers when they are talking to children of fourteen and upwards. How we ought to regard the religion of the immense majority of our fellow-citizens is not wholly an easy question. We have to combine caring and appreciation for our own religion with toleration and respect for the religion of our neighbours. We have to show to our children that beautiful and noble lives can be lived as the outcome of different creeds, and yet we have also to teach them that, in the long run and in the end, truth and goodness must go together, and that the fullest truth must produce the fullest goodness. We shall tell them (as I have already indicated) that there may be elements of truth in a religion other than our own, which our own religion may not perhaps to-day emphasise so fully or so clearly, while yet, as a whole, we nevertheless hold that our own religion is the truest and the best. The dispersion of Israel over the world gives us a great and peculiar vantage-ground. We can adopt and assimilate aspects and pieces of truth from many quarters, and thus we can make our Judaism still grander and fuller, more adequate in its teachings to the immense complexity and amplitude of truth. We shall maintain Judaism while we develop it, and our descendants will do the

same. Yet we shall not disguise from our children that Judaism and Christianity do differ from each other in certain most important particulars, as I have very plainly stated in the present chapter. And we shall also point out that among those who bear the Christian name there are many who have abandoned, or softened down, some of the old Christian positions, and who profess a religion which is in many respects nearer to the Judaism of to-day than was the Christianity of their forefathers. Though we are a small minority, it may nevertheless be that our faith will be justified—the faith, namely, that the central doctrines of Judaism will become the ultimate religion of the countries in which Judaism at present seems to play so small and insignificant a part.

The adherents of the Jewish religion live as a small minority among a big majority of men and women who profess a different faith. The vast majority of the men and women of England are Christians, of one shade or another, and of varying degrees of orthodoxy. The English Jews form, or seek to form, with this great majority a single nation, united in all things except in religion.

But this very exception might, under certain conceivable circumstances, cause a difference so acute and wide that it would be impossible for non-Jew and Jew to form one people, or, in other words, that it would be impossible for the Jew to find himself one with his neighbours. Suppose that the other inhabitants of England were all Polytheists, I doubt whether a national unity of Jew and non-Jew, in spite of religious diversity, would be possible. The religious difference would be too wide, and its implications would go too deep, for unity to be attainable. For religion is not mere speculative

opinion about the super-earthly and the supernatural. It enters into daily life; it colours our ideas of morality; it inspires and controls our action. It regulates our practice; it determines our ideals. If, then, two religions are both very keenly held, if their influence upon their adherents is still very deep and strong, and if the two religions are extremely diverse, so that there is little which is common between them and very much which is different and opposed, then indeed it may well be that adherents of the one and adherents of the other could not form together a united and harmonious people. For it would not only be speculative ideas about God and the unseen world which would divide them: it would be different conceptions of morality, different moral and spiritual ideals, different goals of social endeavour.

Such incompatibility is by many said to exist, for instance, between Mahommedans and Hindoos in India. Such, however, is not the case as regards Judaism and Christianity.

For, in the first place, not only did Christianity spring out of Judaism—not only were its founder and its earliest apostles Jews—but it has retained much of the religion from which it sprang. Christianity claims to be a monotheistic religion. Its Monotheism may seem in Jewish eyes less pure than Jewish Monotheism. But this is a question of opinion. Both religions are monotheistic, though each regards its own Monotheism as purer, better and truer than the Monotheism of the other.

But the agreement goes a good deal further. For in their conception of God and of his relation to man there is also a good deal of sympathetic concurrence. Both hold that the one and only God is

good and righteous and loving; both hold that he has relations with man; both hold that he *cares*. Both hold that man was "created in the divine image," that God influences man and "inspires" him. Both can speak of the holy and divine spirit within the soul of man. Both believe that man can commune with God. Both believe in prayer.

Again, the ideals of the one concerning goodness and righteousness are very largely the ideals of the other. A considerable majority of both to-day believe in the progress of the human race upon earth—of an earthly kingdom of God to be worked for and prayed for, which is drawing a little (if only a little) nearer and nearer. Both believe in the immortality of the soul.

The Bible of Christianity is larger than the Bible of Judaism. But though its most important part is that extra bit which is peculiar to it, it nevertheless cherishes the Hebrew Bible as well, and holds much of it exceedingly dear and high. Christian admiration for the religious and moral ideals of the prophets, for the spiritual fervour and beauty of the Psalter, is hardly less than Jewish admiration (and sometimes rests, to our shame, may I add, upon a more intimate and familiar knowledge).

In the second place, though most Jews would deny this, for they are very keen to deny any admixture of outside influence upon themselves, Christian ideals and Christian civilisation have influenced Judaism. I cannot attempt to prove this assertion here (and it may be that I am mistaken), but I am confident that the Judaism of an ordinary English orthodox Jew—the religion, that is, by which he really lives and which is really his—is not entirely the same as that of an ordinary orthodox Jew of

Bagdad or Teheran. The difference is due to the environment, to the hundred and one subtle influences, which have affected and affect the English Jew on the one hand, the Eastern Jew upon the other. And this environment is a Christian environment, soaked through and through with effluences from Christianity and from Christian ideals.

The result of all this is that though there are grave differences between Judaism and Christianity, and even between English Judaism of to-day and English Christianity of to-day, there are still greater and deeper agreements. The Jews and Christians can and do form one nation, one people, one political community, united by common ideals, affections, aims, united in the equal service of one and the same Motherland. England can be and is "Mother England" to the Jew no less than to the Christian.

The impartial observer may also note the following. Certain doctrines are claimed *both* as specifically Jewish *and* as specifically Christian. And both religions, or rather the exponents of both religions, have a tendency to caricature the other. Both have a tendency to judge the other religion from its defects rather than from its qualities. Both are inclined to shut their eyes to the fact that the other religion has *developed*, and that the Judaism and Christianity of the twentieth century are not the Judaism and the Christianity of the first or fourth.

And the result of this is that there is more *actual* agreement between both religions *to-day* than many of their respective adherents would allow or are aware of. But such agreements, even though unknown or unallowed, yet make for national unity and coalescence.

I do not propose in this chapter to draw out and set forth the differences between Judaism and Christianity in a regular and formal manner. I do not think that it would serve much useful purpose to say that Christianity teaches the "Divinity of Christ," the "Incarnation," the "Trinity," the "Atonement," "Mediation," and so on, and that Judaism not only denies these doctrines, but teaches other positive doctrines, opposed to, and excluded by, the Christian doctrines just enumerated. To do this would only be of use if I were to set forth in detail—and with fullness, accuracy and fairness —what these Christian doctrines actually meant, and what they actually mean to-day. But, in the first place, I have not the knowledge to do all this, and, in the second place, it would mean not a chapter in a book, but a book all to itself, and that book not a very short one. I shall touch on some of the differences in a very informal way, and make it more my object to set forth what I conceive to be the Jewish point of view than to set forth the Christian point of view. For, after all, I know my own religion much better and more intimately than I know the religion of my neighbours.

First, then, as to the Jewish and Christian conception of God and of his relation to man. I need not repeat again what I have said in my first few chapters about the Jewish conception of the Divine Unity. I would only here desire to emphasise the point that we do not hold that the Divine Unity, though perfect, is therefore poor. On the contrary, we believe it to be immensely rich. And that God has many *aspects*, who would wish to deny? That you may, if you please, think of God in himself, that you may think of him in relation

to the world, and that you may think of him in relation to man—three main "aspects"—may also be conceded. But his Unity none the less remains perfect and supreme.

The fact is that how we regard God, apart from a particular event in human history, is not the real question at issue. This is not the real stumbling-block to the Jew; this is not the real point of difference between himself and the Christian. The real point of difference is in the doctrine of the relation of God to man.

The dogma of the Incarnation has taken many forms and been interpreted in different ways. I suppose the interpretation of it by a Liberal Christian to-day is not the interpretation of it by even the greatest Christian minds of the fourth and the fifth century. But whether this is so or not, I am not competent to speak. So much, however, I can say, and say with assurance and authority, that to no existing form of the dogma of the Incarnation is Judaism—both Orthodox and Liberal Judaism—anything but opposed.

Let me seek to explain why, even though I adopt (for fear lest I misrepresent it) the not very logical course of omitting to state what that dogma of the Incarnation actually is.

Judaism does not seek to deny what may be called—with some danger and unsatisfactoriness—the divinity of man. It does not put God on one side, and man on the other, with no relation or bridge between them. It affirms that man was "created in the image of God"; that man has a spark of the divine fire; that God's holy spirit is in man; that man can commune with God, and that God can have relations with, and inspire, man, just because

there is a kinship between them. Man has received a divine element from the divine source.

But at that point Judaism stops. If it asserts the communion and the kinship, it lays no less stress upon the difference. The very essence of religion for man lies to Judaism in the difference, no less than in the kinship. Man's divine spark is essentially dependent and derivative. Man is imperfect; God is perfect. Man is finite and errs; God is infinite and faultless. Man can never become God; God can never become man. There have been many men who were very good and very wise; there never has been, and there never can be, a man who was perfectly good and perfectly wise. I have just read (1911) an article in the *Hibbert Journal* by the Rev. W. Wooding. This article ends with words which struck me as so curiously at one with my own Jewish feeling that I cannot refrain from quoting them. The writer says: "It serves no useful or legitimate purpose to break down the distinction between the human and the divine. They are not the same, however true it may be that God is in all that exists, and that we live and move and have our being in Him."

I would not deny that the dogma of the incarnation of God in Jesus has had its effects for good as well as for evil. But none the less do Liberal Jews hold that it rests on a confusion, the confusion of a man with God. And we will never accept, or help to perpetuate, a confusion which, as Mr. Wooding writes, "though fraught with good as well as ill, is none the less confusion, and ought not for any human purpose to be maintained."

Judaism, while recognising the omnipresence of the Deity, is yet the enemy of Pantheism. It

clings, sometimes with an almost exaggerated one-sidedness and pertinacity, to the self-consciousness of God. He is a "person though not as ourselves." With the purity and emphasis of its Theism Judaism stands or falls. The Father is no less real than his human Child. Indeed he is far more real: far more a Unity, far more a self-consistent reality. Only because he is all this is he the Father: only because he is distinct from the child, and because the child is always the child, is he for ever and ever the Father. Father and child is the metaphor we love, even more than father and son: for the wisest and the best of us must, as compared with him, be mere babies. Whether in this life or in another, we are always the Children, and he is always the Father. Very near is he, yet also very far: like unto God shall man become; like unto God the best men have been, but uniquely divine never. God is righteous, and no righteousness is perfect except his own. He is loving, and no love is perfect except his.

I said that Judaism teaches that God, in his unique perfection very distant from man, is also *very near*. The Christian doctrines of the Atonement, and of the Mediation, of Christ have, like the doctrine of the Incarnation, meant different things in different ages and to different thinkers. And these doctrines to Liberal Christians to-day mean, I fancy, something different again. But they can hardly, I imagine, take any form or receive any connotation to which Judaism would not be opposed.

It is sometimes thought that Judaism teaches a very stern and severe God. So far as his relations with his worshippers are concerned, this description of the Jewish God would be inaccurate even for

the Judaism of the Talmudic and mediæval periods. I am, however, not concerned with Judaism in the past; I am only concerned with the Judaism of to-day, and more especially with Liberal Judaism. And of modern Judaism it might perhaps be said that it errs, if at all, on the side of teaching a too easy-going and good-natured God. However this may be, Judaism stands in need of no mediator and no mediation. It brings together in close relation man and God, and it declares that there is, and need be, and can be, no other being or thing to act as bridge or go-between or intercessor.

Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

That is *Jewish* doctrine. Between the personal and immediate relations—intimate and sacred—of the Father and the Child none must intervene. They can be allowed to have their own dealings with each other, and none need interfere. No priestly rite, no sacramental ceremonies, are required. Modern Judaism is a priestless religion.

God is justice, but he is *also* love. He is no more the first than the second, for he is One. To us there is but one atonement—the atonement wrought by human repentance and the divine forgiveness; by God's grace and help upon the one hand, by human remorse and effort upon the other.

The process is doubtless very subtle, but put into words it is simple, and in practice it is efficacious and works. That is the Jewish atonement: we know no other. We see the need for no other. Indeed any other would deny the sufficiency and power of ours. And therefore it is that in no other can we believe.

I need not refer here to the doctrines of "Original

Sin" and to the "Fall," for these are no longer prominent points of difference between Judaism and Christianity. The majority of cultivated Christians believe in a "Fall" in the old sense no more than we, and as to the doctrine of sin, whether it be "original" or no does not seem to matter much, for as to its practical universality both religions seem fairly well agreed. "There is no man that sinneth not," said the author of Solomon's prayer, and this is still the doctrine of the synagogue.

More important is the point that modern Judaism is strongly universalist as regards the life after death. It holds that to all men shall come enlightenment and salvation. How far every form of modern Christianity teaches the same doctrine I am not in a position to say.

Again, modern Judaism declares that religious belief or unbelief is no bar to such universal enlightenment. And if there be stages (as it would seem only rational to believe) in the attainment of salvation, Judaism would lay stress for the speedier attainment of such "salvation" upon conduct rather than upon belief.

It is sometimes still said that Judaism teaches justification by works, and that Christianity teaches justification by faith. Each religion interprets this difference to its own advantage. Judaism says that God looks, not to what a man believes, but to what he does. Let a Christian, Mahommedan, Buddhist, yes, even an atheist or a pagan, seek to do what his conscience or his particular faith tells him is right, and he shall be "saved." Christianity, Jewish teachers say, declares that salvation is dependent upon holding that certain *doctrines* are true, and that certain alleged events actually happened. So

far as this *is* the meaning of justification by faith, or so far as it has degenerated into meaning *this*, there can be no question, to my mind, that the Jewish doctrine of justification by works is nobler, truer and more consonant with the goodness of God.

And in certain respects Liberal Judaism champions it to-day. We still hold that conduct is more important than belief, and that right and noble conduct can spring from, or connect with, many varying religious beliefs. We still hold and preach that to seek goodness and perform it is the greatest and best exposition and interpretation of the true knowledge and service of God.

But Christian teachers would, I believe, tell us that the Jewish explanation of their doctrine of justification by faith is very inadequate and *tends* to caricature. It is inaccurate, at all events, as regards that doctrine *at its best*.

I will not set forth what the Christian doctrine actually is. I will only point out certain needful corrections of the *Jewish* doctrine, which may incline us to believe that the *complete* truth is a combination of both justification by faith and of justification by works.

A Christian teacher might tell us that man must not be judged or merely judged by what he does, but by what he is. Two men may *do* the same outward deeds from very different motives: the one from the love of God; the other for self-glorification. What a man *is*—his true character—is partly conditioned by, or is partly the effect of, not so much his beliefs, as his *faith*. If a man not only "believes" in God, but has a living faith in him as the source of goodness and of truth, a faith in the divine love and in the divine help, will this

faith not influence his character and find expression in his deeds? If a man did not have this faith, and then it came to him, might it not, to use a familiar phrase, make a new man of him? Is not therefore the faith the *source* of the deeds? If a man has such a living faith, is not that faith the fountain and origin of his actions? His faith is the core of his character, and his faith pervades and illumines his whole personality. If that man is justified by anything of his, surely it must be by his *faith*, by his own inmost self.

In lessening degrees we all have our faiths—not a parcel of beliefs held intellectually or on authority, but the principles by which we live, the characters, or the cores of the characters, which we are. Our faiths may be weak and poor; they may be held loosely or freely, but such as they are, and in the manner that they are, they are ours. They form the springs of our actions, and in and through them our characters are manifested and expressed. To that extent it would be true to say that if what is *ours* justifies us, we are justified by our faith. For our faiths, or *in* our faiths, are *we*.

Thus we may seek to "justify" both justification by works and justification by faith, and then we may seek to harmonise and reconcile them. We need them both: each possesses its measure of truth. I cannot help believing that this old point of difference between Judaism and Christianity may gradually be done away with. Each will recognise that the fuller truth lies in a combination of doctrines hitherto thought opposed and alien to each other.

Now I have already said that Judaism is inflexible as to the derivative and imperfect character of human

goodness. It denies the special and unique Incarnation of God in any human being. What, then, is its attitude to the man (and that man a Jew) in whom Christianity holds that this unique incarnation was achieved? What is the Jewish attitude to Jesus of Nazareth?

CHAPTER XXI

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It will perhaps be said by some persons that any answer to the question put at the end of the last chapter has nothing to do with Judaism, and that it should not therefore find a place in any book which essays to deal with, or speak of, the Jewish religion. Jesus of Nazareth, it will be said, was the founder of Christianity, but though he and Paul were Jews, neither they nor the New Testament have anything to do with Judaism or with the history of the Jewish religion.

I am not concerned to rebut these propositions: I rather prefer to turn their flank. It will hardly be denied that the differences between Judaism and Christianity should form part of a book which attempts to make suggestions to parents and teachers. Living as we do in a Christian environment, seeing that most of our children attend Christian schools, talk with Christian friends, and of necessity read Christian (because English) books, we ought surely to make our children acquainted at some period or other with our relation to Christian teaching, so far as it markedly differs from our own. I remember that in the Confirmation lectures which Mr. Marks used to deliver, year by year, to boys and girls of the average age of fourteen, at the West London, or Reform, Synagogue, he always used to finish his course

with a couple of lectures or lessons on the differences between Judaism and Christianity.

With some of these differences I have dealt in the last chapter. But is not one of them the attitude which Judaism has taken up, or should take up, towards the person and the teaching of Jesus? Our boys and girls know well enough that the Bible to the whole civilised world—in a sense even to the civilised non-Christian world—does not mean what the Jews mean by the Bible. It means something larger. It means the addition of writings which are found appended to every English Bible, writings which, as our boys and girls can easily discover for themselves, have had gigantic influences in the world, and which, as they also can easily discover, are commonly rated as, in many respects, supplementary and superior to the other collection of writings which alone form the Hebrew Bible and the Bible of the Jews. Our children cannot be very old, and need not be very learned, before they will hear that a section of this portion of the general or Christian Bible contains a record of the life of one who is supposed to have lived an ideal life of goodness, and to have made a voluntary sacrifice of his life for the benefit of mankind. They will read quotations from the New Testament, which, to say the least of it, may not seem to them without moral and religious attractiveness. They may be inclined to read for themselves, whether permitted or unpermitted, a book which is not very long and is so very easily obtainable.

It seems, therefore, far better that something should be said than that stony silence should be preserved. Such a silence is only too likely to whet the appetite of our children for a subject or a book about which there is something queer, taboo, secret, or uncanny. On the other hand, in this place it is clearly only possible to touch upon the subject in the briefest and most fragmentary way.

So far as my last chapter is concerned, there is little in it, I think, which may not be taken as an average or ordinary view of Liberal Judaism about the subjects with which it deals. I may be perhaps a little more impartial than some other Liberal Jewish writers, but I do not suppose there is any very great difference. The Liberal Jew is in some respects still further removed from orthodox Christianity than the Conservative Jew. Such an assertion may seem odd, but it is nevertheless true. The Liberal Jew who no longer believes in the miracles of the Old Testament is not likely to accept the miracles of the New. He who has learnt to apply the canons of historical criticism to the Pentateuch will not fight shy of applying them to the Gospels. It was once said of the present writer by an orthodox Christian that, in spite of certain supposed advances towards a due appreciation of the teaching of Jesus, there was no one further from Christianity, no one more fixedly rooted in bigoted and one-sided Judaism, than he!

It is, however, these supposed advances towards a right appreciation of the teaching of Jesus that may be involved and come to the fore in the present chapter. Hence, while, as I have said, my remarks in the previous chapter may be taken as the average holdings of Liberal Judaism in regard to the differences between Judaism and Christianity, it may be fair in the present chapter to warn my readers that my remarks are more peculiar to myself. They must not be looked upon as the average pronouncements of Liberal Judaism.

The whole situation, if I may use that word, in regard to the New Testament has totally changed in the last thirty or forty years. What was then

thought of and talked of was whether Jesus fulfilled the prophecies, whether he was the Messiah. If it could be shown that he did not fulfil the prophecies, and that he could not conceivably have been the Messiah whom Isaiah and other Hebrew seers expected and predicted, then the whole business was concluded. The Gospels were looked upon as wholes, and at their face value.

From that point of view things were easy. It could be shown, it can still be shown, that the Messiah who, for example, is spoken of in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah is quite a different sort of person from Jesus of Nazareth, that he was to live a different life, and to die a different death. It could and can easily be shown that the events which were to follow upon the advent of the Messiah—the King of the seed of David—certainly did not happen upon the coming of Jesus. No peace has ensued; no kingdom of God upon earth; no universal righteousness and prosperity. It could and can most easily be shown that the Hebrew Prophets say nothing of a second Messianic coming, separated from the first by an interval of hundreds and perhaps thousands of years. It could and can easily be shown that the use of the Hebrew Prophecies in the New Testament is strained and absurd, and that the prophecies which are supposed to tell in favour of the Messianic claims of Jesus, tell, in truth, most emphatically against them. It could be shown that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah refers, not to an individual at all, but to Israel as a whole, or to the ideal Israel in particular. Quite as easy was it to demolish the Biblical argumentations of Paul. They rest on a method of interpretation which is opposed to common sense and to actual fact. Not one of the peculiar

Pauline doctrines—the efficacy of the death upon the cross, the resurrection, and so on—can be proved from the Old Testament writings.

The old Jewish refutation of orthodox Christianity, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, is complete and triumphant. It is even acknowledged to be so by the best Christian scholars themselves. The prophecies are supposed to have been fulfilled in Jesus, or by Jesus, only in a spiritual or world-historic sense, and so on. That is to say, it is acknowledged that the old so-called proofs have hopelessly broken down, and it comes to this, that in their determined opposition to those proofs the Jews were wholly in the right.

We no longer need argue to-day at length, and with solemnity, that Jesus did not fulfil the predictions of the Prophets. We can make very short work of that. He certainly did not fulfil them, whether in his life or in his death. We can easily tell young people, when we begin to speak to them about Jesus, that it is much under dispute whether Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah or not, and if he did, in what sense. We can further tell them that we do not know whether Jesus foresaw his death, or whether he regarded that death as a quenching, or as a fulfilment, of his expectations. We can tell them that it may be that he thought that before his death God would intervene and deliver him and establish the Messianic kingdom, and that perhaps he went up to Jerusalem not to die, but (as he thought) to conquer.

All this is easy and straightforward. But as we no longer believe in the coming of a personal Messiah, and thus no longer believe in or teach the literal accuracy of the Messianic predictions of the

Prophets, we do not bother our heads about the Messianic claims or consciousness of Jesus. If he did *not* think he was the Messiah, his teaching about God and man will not therefore (in our eyes) be the better, and if he did erroneously think he was the Messiah of the Prophets, or if he thought he was the Messiah in some peculiar sense of his own, his teaching about God and man is not the worse. The question of his Messiahship, and of what he thought about it, is psychologically, historically, biographically, of very great interest; but, from the religious point of view, to Liberal Jews it is of no interest at all. It does not matter; it leaves them cold.

Similarly the discussions about the Old and the New Covenant have lost their flavour. From the literal, orthodox point of view the Jewish interpretation has won a complete victory. The Pentateuch says, and means to say, nothing whatever about a New Covenant. It never anticipates that the Law is only to be observed as regards its ceremonial side till the advent of the Messiah. It never says that the commands are for a season. On the contrary. They are to be "statutes for ever, throughout your generations." Again, it is perfectly easy to show that the orthodox Christian conception of the sacrificial death of Jesus and of his vicarious atonement is opposed to the teachings of the Pentateuch, and, as interpreted in olden days, and up to modern times, that the conception was also opposed to the teaching of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It can be easily shown that Jeremiah in his famous thirty-first chapter did not mean by a New Covenant what Christian teachers have supposed that he meant.

All this is easy, but to a large extent unnecessary. For Liberal Judaism no longer teaches the eternal validity of the Pentateuchal laws or law: we teach a progressive religion, a progressive apprehension and unfolding of the will of God. A fixed and definite opposition between old Covenant and new Covenant has ceased to have for us any practical meaning or importance. The controversy, like so many other controversies, has become obsolete; it has burnt itself out.

It is just into this progressive conception of religion and of Judaism that I think we have to bring and fit the teaching of Jesus and of Paul. We need have no fear or anxiety if that teaching contained elements of truth and beauty which were new—elements which had at one time or another been parts of our religion, but which we had ourselves let go, or on which we laid insufficient stress, or again elements which have either won their way into Judaism by other channels, or which have still to be (as they profitably could be) incorporated and adopted into our religion. We shall have no fear of showing that the teaching of these two great men (and we shall not hesitate to call them great, both for their historic results and for themselves) contained both true elements and false elements, acceptable things and doubtful things, and that sometimes true doctrines were cast in a false and unacceptable form.

On these lines, and from these points of view, we have, I think, to approach, to deal with, and to speak of, the teaching of Jesus and of Paul. I do not see why we need be so excited about it, whether we approve or whether we criticise. But I do think that it would consort with the divine character less

well, and perchance with the principles of the divine rule less well, so far as human reason can dimly apprehend them, if the founders of a great religion, such as Christianity—which we admit to have brought many to God, which we admit, like every other great religion, to have grown up with God's will and to be the executant of his purposes, which we admit to have wrought very great good (if also much evil)—were common impostors or even common or ordinary men.

That Jesus, therefore, had a noble character, that his teaching was in many things, or as a whole, original and good and true, and that he was therefore in so far inspired—instead of conflicting with my conception of God, agrees and consorts with it. Instead of weakening my belief in Liberal Judaism (adjective *and* noun), it strengthens and confirms it. And if I feel like this myself as regards these views about Jesus and his teaching, and their relation to God and to Liberal Judaism, why may I not put them before others? I believe that they can be put before young people simply and clearly, and that the result will be that these young people, so far from becoming Christians, will become all the better Jews, —Jews of that large and comprehensive Judaism which is to become more and more the one great Judaism of the future both in the Old World and the New.

Into the details of my conception of both the character and the teaching of Jesus I cannot enter. Those who would wish to know them can easily find them in my little book called, *The Religious Teaching of Jesus*, and in my larger work, *The Synoptic Gospels*.[1]

[1] Both books were published by Macmillan. The former costs 3s. 6d., but the latter is out of print.

Here let me only say that Jesus seems to me to take up again, amid changed and in some respects more difficult conditions, some of the teaching which was put forward by the Prophets: I mean especially as to the relation of inward and outward religion to each other, and as to the service of God being shown in the service of man. His teaching in regard to retribution, to merit, to the love of one's enemy, seems to me both original and striking, and to deserve the fullest and most careful consideration. His teaching respecting repentance, forgiveness, humility, and many other things, seems to me to be essentially Jewish, if not essentially original, and to present Jewish doctrine in sayings and parables of great power, beauty and impressiveness. Some of his teaching, again, is much more doubtful: it may, however, be true and valuable in the spirit though not in the letter. It requires discussion. Here I should especially allude, if I were talking to young people, to his teaching about prayer, about riches, about non-resistance. Some of his teaching, again, seems to me erroneous, involved in the limited outlook of his time. Such would be his teaching about the "strait gate," about the many who take the wrong way and are lost, about the few who take the right way and are saved, about Gehenna and its fire. The net result would, however, be that the erroneous elements can easily be dropped out, and that we can and should concentrate our attention, even as we do in the case of the Prophets and the Psalms, upon what is helpful and good and true.

I should say much the same sort of thing about Paul and his epistles. Only as regards Paul, while holding him to be one of the most original and powerful minds who have ever written about religion,

we shall, I think, have to tell our young people that very much of his doctrine, and very many of his arguments, have become obsolete. The keynote of his whole teaching is false. It turns upon conceptions, such as that of the Fall, which are obsolete, and is itself therefore all the more obsolete and false. Paul puts a divine being (for his Christ is neither man nor God) between us and God, and nothing is more opposed to Judaism, and nothing do we hold to be more false, than this. We do not require, we revolt from, his doctrine of mediation; we do not require, we reject, his teaching about the sacrificial death of Christ; we do not require, we reject, his doctrine of atonement and salvation.

But, on the other hand, we can find more than one teaching of nobility and of truth in the Pauline epistles, though sometimes the teaching may be cast in an erroneous or inadequate form. Thus the Pauline doctrine of faith contains elements of great value, though also elements of falsity and of danger. Again, it is Paul (and not Jesus) who brings the Prophetic universalism to its full and final conclusion. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." We greatly improve upon Paul, for we say: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for all are the children of God, and this whether they believe in God or do not believe in Him." But though our universalism is grander and truer than Paul's, we will not ignore the world's debt to him, or forget, in the history of universalism, to assign to him his high and his rightful place.

Many other points of value could be picked out

from the Pauline epistles, but I have no space to do so here.

In accordance with our estimate of the teaching of Jesus and of Paul should be our estimate of the New Testament as a whole. We shall accept, and gladly learn from, what seems to us good and true in it; we shall reject what seems to us erroneous and bad.

The Bible of the world contains both the Old and the New Testaments; the Bible of the Jews contains only the Old Testament. Should this limitation always be maintained? Should the Jews be willing to include within *their* Bible the New Testament as well as the Old? It might be said that our doctrine of inspiration is different now from what it used to be, that we no longer suppose that only the Hebrew prophets, or the writers of the Hebrew Bible, were inspired, but that if Jesus, for example, said anything which was new, good and true, we are not unwilling to recognise in such words the only Source of the good and the true, not unwilling to say that the Divine Spirit rested also upon him. It might be said that we admit errors in the Old Testament as well as in the New, and that we cannot limit our Bible to the Old on the plea that the one Testament is perfect, the other imperfect.

In spite of these and similar arguments, I am of opinion that the Bible of the Jews and of Judaism must continue to be the Hebrew Bible and the Hebrew Bible only. I touched upon this subject at the end of the second volume of my *Bible for Home Reading*, which was first published in 1899, and I have not changed my opinions since. I do not know that I can do better than repeat here what I there said. I am the more inclined to do so because

it has been suggested by an opponent of my views that I have changed my mind, and that I now desire to include the New Testament in the Bible of Judaism. But in spite of my deep and abiding admiration for the teaching of Jesus, it will be seen that if I now re-enunciate what I said in 1899, and declare that I have never modified my attitude, the hint which my opponent threw out was neither justified nor accurate.

There is much in the New Testament which is great and noble, much which is sublime and tender, much which is good and true. Of this "much," the greater part consists in a fresh presentment of some of the best and highest teaching in the Old Testament, in a vivid reformulation of it, in an admirable picking and choosing, an excellent bringing together. But a part consists in a further development, or in a clearer and more emphatic expression, of certain truths which previously were only implicit or not fully drawn out. Thus of its excellence part may in this sense be called old, and part may in this sense be called new. But in close and curious combination with what is good there are some things which are erroneous and harmful, and there are others which are liable to dangerous perversion, or which hold within them the germs of evil, and have borne evil fruit.

Among the good and true elements of the New Testament may be mentioned important and suggestive modifications of the doctrine of retribution and of the relation of suffering to sin, a fresh and noble restatement of the old prophetic doctrine, "I desire love and not sacrifice," a passionate enthusiasm for the moral and religious regeneration of the outcast and the sinner, fine teaching about the nature and power of love and the duty of forgiveness, fresh contributions to the conceptions of self-sacrifice, suffering and religious inwardness, suggestive (if somewhat dangerous) teaching on the subject of the divine immanence and of the divine in man, a striking presentment of the true and intimate relation of the human child to the divine Father, and, last not least, a clear and emphatic recognition that this divine fatherhood

extends equally to the Gentile and the Jew. It should be noted that parallels to many of these excellent teachings are also to be found in the Rabbinical writings. It was indeed perfectly natural that the same religious ideas and developments should occur independently to several Jewish minds. Thus, for example, the deep reply which, according to the Talmud, was made by the "wise men of the south" to the king of Macedon is the precise equivalent of one of the most notable sayings attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. ("Alexander said to them, 'What should a man do that he may live?' They said, 'Let him kill himself.' 'And what should a man do that he may die?' They said, 'Let him seek to keep himself alive.'")

Among the elements of the New Testament to which Jewish critics (as it seems to me most rightly) take strong exception, there may be mentioned the serious weakening of that fundamental doctrine of Judaism which declares the unity of God, the exaltation of a man into partnership with Deity, the strange conception of the absolute incarnation of God in human form, the putting of an intermediary, half God and half man, or wholly man and wholly God, between the human child and the divine Father, certain teachings about atonement, demoniacal possession and punishment after death, and a one-sided conception of faith containing within it the seeds of persecution and fanaticism, and sometimes tending to the severance of morality from religion.

For good and for evil—and the two have often been strangely mixed up and interwoven together — the New Testament has been of enormous influence in the moral and religious history of the world. For that reason alone all Jews who, like other civilised persons, want to know about that history must read the New Testament, and read it, if they can, with impartial minds, ready to receive the good and to reject the evil. But it cannot be admitted into a Jewish *Bible for Home Reading*. Not only that the critical study of it is unsuited for the young. There is more than this involved. For if it be said that in the Hebrew Bible too we have found higher and lower teaching, doctrine to reject as well as doctrine to receive, this argument would not suffice for the inclusion of the New Testament into the

Bible of the Jews. It is one thing to observe, with growing thought and developed conceptions of religion and morality, deficiencies and unevennesses in the sacred scriptures which *have been* your community's sacred scriptures for two thousand years ; it is quite another thing to add on to those scriptures other writings in which evils and errors, some of which I have mentioned above, are known and recognised to exist. Moreover, the grave errors which we Jews think that we can detect in the New Testament are very closely connected with, even if they do not actually constitute, its most essential teachings. These errors are in fact among the very points which the great mass of Christians regard as its most peculiar characteristics and its most vital truths. Some of them, at any rate, seem to us to contradict the teaching of the Old Testament just where that teaching is at its truest, its purest and its best. For these reasons, even if there were no others, the Bible of the Jews must remain limited to the books which now compose it.

The Jews must ever remain, so long as the fundamental religious doctrines of Judaism are not universally acknowledged, the anxious guardians of the purest Monotheism. In spite of the sublimity of much of the teaching attributed to Jesus, there is a good deal in the New Testament (though not in the teaching which is most probably its hero's) in which that Monotheism is, as we believe, dimmed and injured. On the other hand, to the world as a whole, and to all non-Jews, the Bible will, I think, always continue to include the New Testament as well as the Old. Just as Liberal Jews of to-day treasure the Old Testament for all that is good in it and true, rightly neglecting and passing over what is inconsistent with that goodness and truth, so will it be with the New Testament and the outer world. The errors, the crudities, the falsities, will (as in the case of the Jews and the Old Testament) be slurred over and neglected; the beauties, the truths, the ex-

cellences, will abide. For these things (and in both Testaments enough of this second category will always remain) it will continue to be cherished and beloved. To the Jews the Pentateuch will always retain a peculiar value, but I can hardly conceive a time when by the general world it will religiously be more prized than the Gospels. Hence, both as regards what is said of Jesus, or of the New Testament as a whole, I should by no means recall, or regard as inconsistent with the quotation from the *Bible for Home Reading*, a passage in my *Synoptic Gospels* (vol. ii. p. 594) which may have induced the misunderstanding above alluded to. The passage is, I admit, strongly and rather rhetorically worded, but I honestly believe it to be true. Here it is: "I cannot conceive that a time will come when the figure of Jesus will no longer be a star of the first magnitude in the spiritual heavens, when he will no longer be regarded as one of the greatest religious heroes and teachers whom the world has seen. I cannot conceive that a time will come when 'the Bible' in the eyes of Europe will no longer be composed of the Old Testament *and* the New, or when the Gospels will be less prized than the Pentateuch, or the Books of Chronicles preferred to the Epistles of Paul. The religion of the future will be, as I believe, a developed and purified Judaism, but from that developed and purified Judaism the records which tell, however imperfectly, of perhaps its greatest, as certainly of its most potent and influential teacher, will not be excluded."

The conclusion of the matter would, therefore, seem to be that, so long as the Jews have to remain a distinct religious community (and this must surely mean for a very long time indeed), their Bible must be the Old Testament only. But when Jewish

Monotheism has conquered the whole world, 'the Bible' of the whole world will contain both the Old Testament and the New.

I personally would not be frightened to tell young people that there is much in the teaching of Jesus which I greatly admire. The religious worth of the New Testament and of the teaching of its hero is, as I have already said, an "open question" among Liberal Jews, but I believe that my own position is not only true, but capable of being put before young people of sixteen and seventeen in a simple and straightforward way, and with eminently satisfactory results. It will, I believe, ensure their loyalty to Judaism, while at the same time satisfactorily explaining to them that profound admiration of the teaching of Jesus which they will find practically universal among educated Europeans, even though a large number of these may no longer believe in the dogmas of the Church.

CHAPTER XXII

OF IDEALS AND LOVE, AND THE LOVE OF ENEMIES

I want to speak in this chapter of some alleged differences between Judaism and Christianity, to which I have not yet alluded. But these differences are very unlike the others: some of them are differences which are rather apparent than real, some of them are differences which many Christians declare to exist, but which many Jews would deny, and others are differences which many Jews would declare to exist, but which many Christians would deny. Why I speak of these less real or more disputed differences is because they will give me an opportunity to set forth what I conceive to be Jewish or Liberal Jewish doctrine on the points concerned, and they are all points of importance.

Both Jews and Christians believe in a world to come, in the dogma and the hope of immortality. But it used often to be said by Jews (perhaps it is less said now than it used to be when I was a boy) that Christianity over-accentuated the other world in relation to this world, while it used to be said by Christians that Judaism over-accentuated this world in comparison with the other. I have alluded to these allegations in another chapter and another connection. They may be taken together with the familiar saying of Bacon : "Prosperity is the blessing

of the Old Testament (that is, of Judaism); adversity is the blessing of the New Testament (that is, of Christianity)." We have, however, seen that these alleged differences and oppositions are false. They are probably false on both sides, for a vast number of Christians would now deny the frequent Jewish assertion of my boyhood, that Christianity declares this world to be, and always intended to be, a vale of tears. What the sober and temperate adherents of both religions would, I think, assert, what sober and temperate Jews would, I feel sure, assert, is, that a right place in their religion is given to both worlds. Perhaps, however, Judaism has been less inclined (in spite of the secular persecutions to which the Jews have been subjected) ever to regard this world or this life as under the rule of any imaginary devil rather than of the One God. This life has an end in itself, though it is also a preparation for another. Jewish teaching has been most wholesome when it has thought least of the teaching of its rival. It has been at its best when it has not been looking with one eye at itself and with one eye at Christianity. When this squinting process has taken place, Jewish teaching has sometimes been perverted and made one-sided in supposed contrast to Christianity. It is not true Judaism, so far as this life is concerned, to regard prosperity as the sole and only divine blessing. And it is not true Judaism (as I have said elsewhere) to depreciate or deny the value of all asceticism. The old Rabbi quoted in Chapter XV. knew better and said truer than that. We may, however, rightly say that the sanctification of life by the taming and hallowing of human instincts, passions and desires rather than by their disuse and excision (whether it be or no a doctrine of Christianity) is an

essential feature, a cardinal doctrine, of Judaism. Thus, to take a salient point, Judaism places marriage above celibacy. The reproductive instincts are also to be tamed and used in the service, and to the glory, of God. And in the sanctification of life and in the service of God man is to find—and will find—not mere perpetual struggle and pain, but highest satisfaction and happiness.

Now this theory of life can be interpreted in more than one way—in a low way or a high way. Perhaps, also, there may be said of it that, like many other high and difficult ideals, it is easily capable of degeneration.

It might be contended that, as one part of its teaching, Judaism says: "Use your instincts; hallow them; be happy." The result is that there is a tendency to think that when you live an ordinary, decent life, honest to your neighbours, faithful to your wife, kindly to your children, giving them and yourself good dinners and a "good time," you are living an admirable Jewish life, and that there is nothing more to be said or to be done. In this way ideals tend to disappear; idealism tends to vanish, and the conception of Judaism and of religion tends to be cheapened, degraded and caricatured. For in truth there is a good deal more to be both said and done. But just because Judaism lays down one ideal for all men, refusing to allow that some men and women are to be "in religion" and some "in the world," but asserting that all are to be "in" the world, though not "of" the world, is there so much danger lest the ideal be insensibly lowered and obscured. For the existence of a class of men and women set apart to live a life of special difficulty and holiness, of special privations and hardships,

of special sacrifice and self-surrender, may have two opposite effects upon the general mass of men and women who live without. It may make them say or feel: "Well, religion and ideal morality are provided for by these holy men and women: they live a life dedicated to the glory of God; that is their *métier*; we are *in* the world, and we need not do anything like *that*; our ideal is rightly and properly a much lower one; in fact, if we live decently and respectably, we may enjoy ourselves in comfort and ease." And so they *do* enjoy themselves, and the ideal becomes lower and lower, and the service of God, which *they* think is demanded of *them*, becomes poorer and more poor.

On the other hand, the existence of the dedicated class, who live for the service of man and of God, may have quite another effect. It may make the men and women of the world remember what the ideal is; it may make them, at all events, acknowledge that that ideal is not merely to be happy and comfortable, decent fathers, kindly husbands, law-abiding citizens, but that it is something far higher, harder and more comprehensive. It may, at any rate, make them reverence a goodness and a love which can never be wholly theirs, or it may make them admit and recognise that this goodness and love can be realised by other men and women, if it cannot be realised by themselves. And this recognition and reverence of the high ideal, as at least partly realised in actual men and women whom they honour and admire, may react upon their own lives, and help them to mount a little farther upward on the moral and spiritual hill.

Now Judaism puts the same ideal before all men; it asks that all, in their various degrees, should seek to

realise it in their lives. Let us, therefore, remember that this ideal is not something low or average or easy, but high, difficult, unattainable. Judaism teaches that the highest love of God and the best service of him are not easy, but hard. Judaism teaches that men must renounce and endure in order to achieve and to perform. It does not teach that sainthood is easy; it does not suppose that many can attain to it. Those who give up all for God and the Highest can only, and will always, be few.

A religious community, in order to be healthy, must, as I have elsewhere said, produce and possess its saints. But it can only do so if its ideals are high.

And this leads me to speak of a supposed difference between Judaism and Christianity, the observation and emphasis of which by Jews has not always been to the advantage of Judaism.

Judaism has always put forward ideals. In old days—for example, in the Pentateuch—it tended to make the ideal a law, and perhaps there has been something of this identification ever since. The moral law to Judaism has not been the minimum of morality, as Mr. Westermarck seems to hold that it is and it must be, but the maximum of morality. For to Judaism the Law is not merely a series of enactments which, if not observed, can be enforced, but it is an ideal which is, and always must be, unattainable. It includes not merely "the commandments of duty," but "the free and lofty aspiration to live up to," or live towards, an ideal which, even though unattainable, yet demands from man a constant struggle to draw as near to it as he can.[1]

[1] Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. i. p. 153. Quoted in my *Synoptic Gospels*, vol. ii. p. 98.

The Pentateuchal law "be ye holy," the Rabbinic law "imitate God," are not mere commands: they are ideals.

If the ideal were not above us, and beyond our attainment, how could we progress? If a man thinks he has attained moral and religious perfection, what a self-righteous fool he must be! Surely

> A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?

Our ideals must, then, be in their fullness unattainable, or they are no true ideals.

But here some Jewish critics begin to cavil. They say: "There are ideals and ideals. The right ideal must be at least capable of partial realisation by all. We all know that none can love God perfectly. We all know that none can be perfectly holy. But all can love God somewhat: all can be somewhat or fairly holy." And in addition to this I think they would say: "The ideal must be extremely broad: 'be holy,' 'love God,' 'love man.' It must not enter into details." They would, I feel sure, say: "An ideal which none can realise might serve for angels; it is no good for man." Or again: "An ideal is no good (and that is why it must be so broad) if only some men can fulfil or seek to fulfil it. An ideal must be an ideal for all. All must aspire to it; all must be able to mount at least the lowest rungs of its ladder."

Now, how did Jewish critics come to make these criticisms? They came to make them, because in the Gospels Jesus sets up ideals which his followers say are higher and nobler than the laws and ideals of the Old Testament in general and of the Pentateuch in particular. And the Jewish critics

have been at pains to show that these supposed higher and nobler ideals are unsuited for mankind, impossible of attainment. Or again: they are not ideals for *all*, because only a very few can even *seek* to fulfil them.

I will mention here two of these ideals—perhaps the most important two—as examples. Jesus declares: "Every one that does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." In other places he seems to lay down the principle of complete self-denial and self-surrender. The Jewish critics say: "Self-denial is an ideal. But self-denial in the sense of being a celibate, or of giving away all your possessions, is not an ideal, for not only can all men not be celibates and give up all their possessions, but it is not desirable that any should do so. The ideal is both impracticable (because it is not universal) and it is also false (because it is undesirable)."

I am not sure that the Jewish critics are right. Who is to say where the ideal of self-denial is to end? Who is to say where, in any particular case, so much self-denial is good and a little more is wrong? May it not be that for some few persons it *is* better *not* to marry; that some can serve God and man better unmarried than married? I do not see that this is by any means impossible or unlikely. And even though, in our present social order, to give away all one's possessions may be inadvisable—to use them well, the Jewish critics might rightly say, is the higher and better ideal—one may, in a sense not sophistical, renounce them all, even though one still possesses them. A man may reduce his personal requirements to a minimum: a man may become more and more independent of

outward things. Who shall say to what extent, in any individual case, this renouncement should be or may be carried ?

Jesus, therefore, was, I think, wrong if he meant that no one who does not give away all his possessions can be a true lover of God and man. He was, however, not wrong in making of self-denial and renouncement an ideal, to which no limits can rightly be assigned.

" Self-denial is good." That is acknowledged by Jew and Christian alike. But let us take great care that the broad maxim or ideal of self-denial, which the Jewish critics admit and approve, is not made so broad that it fails to influence. Self-denial is good, but self-denial in what ? May it not be self-denial in possessions, self-denial in things you like, self-denial in outward success ?

I hope that Jewish parents and teachers may reflect on these queries and on the difficulties which they imply.

Again, self-denial for whom or for what ? And with this I shall gradually come to my second ideal. I suppose the answer can only be : for oneself, or for others, or for God.

It is a curious feature of Jewish criticism of Christianity (but it may conceivably be both curious and true) that it attacks Christian teaching on two opposite grounds. Christian teaching is, on the one hand, too selfish, on the other hand, it is impossibly altruistic.

It is alleged that the Christian motive for all this self-denial is personal salvation. And the Jewish critics say (or in my boyhood they used to say) that we are not to bother about our own salvation. Let us help others and do our duty, and our salvation

will come of itself. We can leave it to God. And it is quite true that if a man were to say: "I do not myself desire to help my neighbour or to lead a life of self-denial. I hate it. But I believe it will secure me a seat in heaven, and therefore I will practise self-denial, though sorely against the grain," he would justly be despised. And possibly the insistence upon the immense importance of our earthly life, in view of the eternity which is to succeed it, may have actually led to such perversions of morality and of religion. But in itself the bidding to prepare for the eternal life is surely not ignoble or undesirable. The old Jewish Rabbi did not think so when he said, "Prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest (be allowed to) enter into the hall." The injunction, "Choose well, thy choice is brief and yet endless," may be exaggerated, for we believe in the ultimate enlightenment and beatitude of all, but it has, at any rate, its measure of truth. If there be another life, and if this life affects our well-being, or the stage at which we begin, in another life, would he not be a fool who did not determine to order his life on earth in conscious reference to his life beyond the grave? If he realises, as Judaism teaches he ought to realise, that the love of man is the best passport to heaven, he will be wholly free of the taint of selfishness. It is perfectly true that he is to trust God, and not to be always anxiously thinking: "What are my future prospects? How stands it with my soul? Will this line of action help me rather than that?" But it is also true that he is to consider and remember that for him, as for others, this life *is* the "preparation" for another. Now you do not "prepare for" a thing without from time to time thinking of the thing for which you are preparing.

You think of it in relation to yourself; you think of yourself in relation to it.

I do not therefore hold that there is much in this particular Jewish criticism, and I do not see much difference here between an enlightened Judaism and an enlightened Christianity. "Prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the hall" is good Jewish teaching and it is good Christian teaching. Neither religion need, I fancy, go farther; both religions must, I fancy, go as far.

I come now a little nearer to the second example, where Christian teaching is said to be impossibly altruistic. A little nearer, but yet I cannot get to it quite at once.

I alluded before to the statement, which I used (if I remember right) to see in Christian books, that the God of Judaism was just, but that the God of Christianity was loving. Or, again, that the God of Judaism was righteousness, but that the God of Christianity is love. Jewish critics have met this criticism in two ways. The first, which is, I think, the true, way is that of denial. The God of Judaism is *both* righteousness *and* love. His love is never in conflict with his righteousness; his righteousness is never in conflict with his love. For God is One.

The second way in which the Jewish critics have met the Christian statement is, however, very different.

Whereas the Christians, in making the statement, mean to imply that the conception of the Godhead is nobler, truer, and higher in Christianity than in Judaism, inasmuch as love is higher and nobler than righteousness, the Jewish critics declare that the God of Judaism is indeed righteousness, for righteousness is superior to love.

Which is correct? Is love better than righteousness, or is righteousness better than love? Is perfect righteousness superior to perfect love, or is perfect love superior to perfect righteousness?

What I fancy the Christians mean is, that love is superior to righteousness, because love is more *active*. Love seeks out; love eagerly desires to save and help and give. Love renounces and sacrifices. Love is ever anxious to do and to aid: it yearns to fight and to redeem. Love makes allowances and pities; love consoles and comforts; love cares and forgives. Love suffers gladly; love endures for the sake of the beloved. Love bears another's burden. Love, in fact, *loves*. Love gives up itself. Love is willing to renounce and to die.

Righteousness does the right and correct thing at every juncture and on all occasions. But does it go out of its own way to help and succour, to forgive and pity and redeem? If not, love is higher than righteousness, and the yearning compassion and the infinite goodness of God must be less akin to righteousness than to love. There is no word which expresses the divine goodness so well as that one simple monosyllable. No sentence can express the divine nature so truly as those three short words: God is love.

But the Jews say: love is emotional; love is partial. What sins have not been committed in the name of love! What evil results have not ensued from the false estimates, and the foolish actions, dictated by love!

Righteousness is goodness, which is wise, which looks before and after, which reflects and judges and weighs. Righteousness includes justice—that great virtue, the full supremacy of which would mean the advent of the Golden Age. Love is a feeling, and

the feelings need not and cannot be dictated to. They will go and come of themselves. But let men nerve themselves and strain themselves to the knowledge and the doing of justice and righteousness—justice and righteousness to one and to all: let this be done, and the Messianic Era will have arrived. And the virtue which, if fully, consistently and persistently practised by men, would mean the advent of the Golden Age—*that* virtue must be the highest! That virtue is the divinest of all. And if we have to describe the nature of God by a single word, how can we do better than to say: God is righteousness? He *is* that virtue, which, if men but practised it to the full, would mean the removal of all wrongdoing and selfishness, the removal of every evil, and the accomplishment of constant rectitude and goodness. The perfect God is perfect righteousness.

The Church with its ideal of love has been in power for sixteen hundred years. Oh for sixteen centuries of the rule of justice! Social reform would then achieve its term. The ideals of the prophets would be realised.

It seems to me that there is a good deal in what the Christians say and a good deal in what the Jews say. I do not mind myself which way you put it, so long as you will allow me to include in *my* ideal *both* righteousness *and* love. Either say that perfect righteousness is loving and eager, and that it does all the things which the Christians affirm that love does, or say that perfect love is wise and righteous, and that it does all the things which righteousness does according to the Jews. The human ideal must be loving righteousness, or righteous love. And God himself must be the perfection of both.

Apart from the suggestion of controversy, the Jews are, rightly enough, as I think, by no means chary of using the word "love." The command to love God follows the declaration of the divine Unity in the *Shema*, accepted by all Jews, Conservative and Liberal, as the corner-stone of the Jewish faith. And from Jewish pulpits, no less than from Christian pulpits, you may hear the human ideal summed up as "the love of man and the love of God." But it is only, as I think, fair to state that that aspect of love of which I have just spoken—the *active* aspect, in virtue of which love goes forth, and gives freely, and yearns to help and to save, in virtue of which it seeks to succour and redeem the sinner, and is ever ready to renounce, to sacrifice and to endure—is largely associated with, and strongly emphasised by, the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. It is not only, as I think, accurate and fair to say this, but I should not be afraid (need we ever be afraid of the truth?) of saying this to children. Nor would I be afraid to tell them that one of the noblest pæans on love ever written by human hands is that which says of it: "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

And I would even add that this great pæan was written by a Jew named Paul! Why should we be afraid, for is not this love suitable and desirable for Judaism? Does it conflict with it? Does it not rather harmonise with it? So that I would not mind repeating to our children the story of that Spanish

Jew, Dr. Nunes, who, according to Wesley, was wont to say that he wished the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (wherein the pæan on love is found) were written in letters of gold, and that every Jew were to carry it with him wherever he went. And perhaps if to the ideal of love were added the ideal of righteousness, I would agree with Dr. Nunes when he said (herein, says Wesley, judging rightly), "that this single chapter contained the whole of true religion."

So much, then, as to the ideals of righteousness and of love. They constitute the goal. The ideal for man is not merely to be a kindly father, a faithful husband and a law-abiding citizen, but it is the ideal of perfect righteousness and perfect love. This is the ideal—the Jewish ideal—towards which we must strain and strive and struggle, and of which even the best of us must fall short.

And now for the second example in which Christian teaching is sometimes said by Jewish critics to be impossibly and undesirably altruistic.

The Law speaks, we are told, to men, and in the language of men. It bids men love their neighbours as themselves. Whether when a man gives his life for his friend, or whether when, as in a fire, a man even sacrifices his life to save some one unknown to him, he does not love his neighbour *more* than he loves himself, I will not inquire. Such sacrifice of his life, such love of another, whether it be *as* of himself or *more* than himself, would be equally ordered and commended by both Christian and Jewish ethics.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," says the Jewish Law. Even more: "Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself," or, if we translate it as some

scholars think it should be translated, the bidding of the Law becomes still more impressive : " Thou shalt love the foreign settler in thy midst as thyself." For this is a law which men find it exceedingly difficult to fulfil : it is an ideal which they find it exceedingly hard to admit or to attempt. It is the law, or the ideal, which all anti-Semitism conspicuously violates, contemns and denies. Certainly many Christian nations, and an enormous number of Christians, have very much to learn yet from that Law which they suppose to be obsolete and superseded ! It is hardly for them to claim that they possess a higher law, a higher ideal, when they so conspicuously violate the lower law, the lower ideal—if lower indeed it be. Perhaps the possession of a supposed Best has been their enemy in the fulfilment of the Good.

But we must not let the sins of Christian nations and of individual Christians prevent us from estimating with judicial impartiality the worth of the Christian ideal.

What, then, does the Gospel say about love ? Does it outstrip the law ? It says : " Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that ill-treat you." It is these injunctions which the Christian regards as the crown and flower of the teaching of Jesus, and which the Jew criticises and depreciates.

I have discussed the command at length in my edition of the *Synoptic Gospels*, and I will now reproduce from that book some part of what I there said.

> The usual Jewish criticism of the injunction, " Love your enemies," is that it is paradoxical, impracticable and absurd. One never opens a Jewish book or pamphlet which deals with Jesus and the New Testament without this

invariable criticism. Thus, for example, Dr. Eschelbacher : "The Jewish law enjoined help and aid to be given to our enemies when in need. It says : 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.' The Jewish sages urged : 'Say not, I will do to him as he has done to me ; I will render to the man according to his work.' And again : 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat ; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.' But Judaism has not ordered us to *love* our enemies. It has regarded such a command as unfulfillable. It has considered that the emotion of *love* towards those who curse, hate, revile, and seek to destroy us, is impossible. The very *demand* for such a feeling is, perhaps, not even good. For even self-denial has its limits : to fight is sometimes not only a necessity, but also a duty. One can only legitimately ask that such a fight should be exclusively directed towards wicked, threatening and powerful antagonists ; there must be no attack upon the conquered, the weak and the needy. These, on the contrary, must be rendered every helpful support and assistance. Such good deeds may then lead on to friendly feelings and reconciliation. And the Christian command to 'love the enemy' has not led to any higher, nobler deeds towards him than these."

It is, in fact, contended by Jewish critics that the defect in the ethical teaching of Jesus is that it is strung so high that it has failed to produce solid and practical results just where its admirers vaunt that it differs from, and is superior to, the ethical teachings and standards of the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Rabbis. . . . The bow is so bent that it snaps altogether.

The history of Christianity, so the Jewish writers urge, is a proof that their criticism of the teaching of Jesus is well founded. For how often, they tell us, do we not hear Lessing's statement repeated, in one form or another, that Christianity has been tried for eighteen hundred years, but that the religion of Jesus remains to be tried ? What does this mean but a confession that the teaching of Jesus, in its most novel and striking features, has remained virtually untried ; that its injunctions are a dead letter ? But the history of Europe

confirms, so it is alleged, the complaint of Lessing. For the adherents of no religion have hated their enemies more than Christians. The atrocities which they have committed in the name of religion, both inside and outside their own pale, are unexampled in the world's history. And even to-day it cannot be truly said that the various sects of Christians love one another, while anti-Semitism is a proof that they do not love those who are not Christians. Toleration is, upon the whole, a product of scepticism, by no means a direct issue of Christianity or of the teaching of Jesus. Thus we see that the injunction "love your enemies" is an injunction which has failed to produce a result. It was conspicuously violated by Jesus himself, who, if he had loved his enemies, would not have called them vipers, or enthusiastically predicted their arrival in hell; it has always been conspicuously violated by his disciples. But the existence of it has caused men to forget, and ignore, and comfortably to violate, the old useful commands which were practicable (and not merely ornamental window dressing), and which could be obeyed: "Bear no grudge; do not revenge; help your enemy when he needs your help, and when you are in a position to help him." Thus as regards *public* enemies and the enemies of their religion, Christians, with their brand-new command, "love your enemies," have hated their enemies and persecuted and tortured them, just as much as could conceivably have happened under the régime of Pentateuch, Prophets and Rabbis, while as regards *private* enemies, there is no reason whatever to believe that Jews have not acted and lived up to as high an ethical standard as Christians. What, then, are we to say of a teaching which has so conspicuously failed in practical results? "By your fruits ye shall be judged," said Jesus, and by its fruits his new and superfine teaching stands condemned.[1]

How far is all this criticism just and fair? Some of it seems beside the mark. For what does the injunction or ideal "Love your enemies" actually mean? Hardly that we are to *feel* towards them

[1] *Synoptic Gospels*, vol. ii. pp. 523, 524.

the same *emotion* as towards our friends. Hardly that we are to be as *fond* of them as we are fond of wife or mother or companion. But "love your enemies" first of all includes helpfulness. We are to do them good when opportunity arises. Here the Jewish law and the Christian law are at one. Next it means that there is to be no revenge, no grudge; no bitterness of heart, no retaliation in thought or word or deed. Here again the Jewish law is at one with the Christian law. But "love your enemies" means something more still. This *more* is just where the word love comes in. Love includes, as we have seen, the element of desire, of activity. "Love your enemies" would therefore mean not merely that we are to harbour no hate or resentment, not merely that we are, if opportunity unsought presents itself, to do them a good turn, or to help them in need, but that we are actively to *seek* to do them good. It means that we are to pray to God that he may enlighten them or destroy their sin: it means that we are to *seek*, if we can, to enlighten and redeem them ourselves.

Now this ideal is very hard: it may, moreover, for most of us be outside our purview and impracticable, either because we have no enemies, that is to say, there are no persons who, to our knowledge or belief, hate and despise us, or because, though we might pray to God on behalf of such persons, no opportunity ever arises in which we could do them moral or material good, however much we might desire to do so.

But I do not think that the command is absolutely *impossible* of fulfilment, or that as an ideal it may not be without its bracing effect upon the mind and the heart of man.

Again, I feel sure that it is totally erroneous to suppose that the ideal has not had its actual results. Christians have greatly sinned, but there have also been among them very many noble and exquisite lives. Who shall number or measure the many actual results for good of this "impracticable" ideal? How many insults have been forgiven; how many chances of retaliation forgone! How many "enemies" have been won over to goodness and to God! "Love your enemies" is the expression of a passionate idealism, but it is just this passionate idealism, this eager and ardent enthusiasm of love, which are likely to stir and stimulate the imagination and the will.

I come back, in conclusion, to laying stress once more on the necessity for Judaism, and for the every-day religion of average Jews, of unattainable ideals. Without them we shall not produce the holy men and women, whom every religion must produce if it is to live and to prosper. We need ideals to keep us fresh and pure and ardent. And the ideal must be a true ideal, distant, hard, impracticable. As I said in my *Synoptic Gospels*, and I think correctly:—

A moral ideal should always be above our complete accomplishment. Let it ask an ell, and man may produce an inch. Let it ask an inch, and man will not even produce the inch. That the ideal is impracticable is by no means a valid criticism against it. Every ideal is and must be impracticable in its completeness. But we can struggle nearer and nearer towards it, and through its constraining power a great deal can be accomplished. . . The value of unattainable ideals is admitted and even emphasised by philosophers who are by no means ordinary Christian believers. Thus Professor Taylor writes: "The distant ideal is the source of our direst mental tortures, and yet

without it, existence would be unendurable. . . . As moral beings we can never exist without some still unreached ideal to serve as a spur to our activity—can never, like Faust, rest on our oars and say to the present, 'Be thou my eternity'; yet even when most irresistibly hurried forward in the chase of our distant ideal, we know quite well in our hearts that we shall only approach it to see it recede still farther away from us. . . . An end that is to be permanently felt as worth striving for must be infinite, and therefore infinitely remote, while any end that is infinite is for that very reason out of reach of attainment, and as far from us after a life of devotion to it as it was at first. . . . The collective wisdom of mankind has long ago discovered that our ideals, whether of sensual gratification, or of knowledge, or of beauty, or of moral improvement, are, one and all of them, unattainable. So that if indifference to the demand for a practicable ideal be the mark of a dreamer or a fanatic, contentment with a final and practicable ideal is no less undeniably the mark of an *esprit borné*." [1]

Jewish teaching has to beware of becoming, through its opposition to Christianity, what Rabbinic teaching most undoubtedly was *not*, "the teaching of an *esprit borné*." We must not seek to diminish the passion, the sweep and the paradox of the ideal. We must not seek to drag it down to the limits of the practical. Otherwise we are likely to diminish the beauty, the splendour, and the originality of the characters, which (especially in days of prosperity) only the ideal can effectively produce and sustain.

[1] *Synoptic Gospels*, vol. ii. pp. 526, 527, quoting A. E. Taylor, *Problem of Conduct*, 1901, p. 401.

CHAPTER XXII

OF IDEALS AND LOVE, AND THE LOVE OF ENEMIES

I want to speak in this chapter of some alleged differences between Judaism and Christianity, to which I have not yet alluded. But these differences are very unlike the others: some of them are differences which are rather apparent than real, some of them are differences which many Christians declare to exist, but which many Jews would deny, and others are differences which many Jews would declare to exist, but which many Christians would deny. Why I speak of these less real or more disputed differences is because they will give me an opportunity to set forth what I conceive to be Jewish or Liberal Jewish doctrine on the points concerned, and they are all points of importance.

Both Jews and Christians believe in a world to come, in the dogma and the hope of immortality. But it used often to be said by Jews (perhaps it is less said now than it used to be when I was a boy) that Christianity over-accentuated the other world in relation to this world, while it used to be said by Christians that Judaism over-accentuated this world in comparison with the other. I have alluded to these allegations in another chapter and another connection. They may be taken together with the familiar saying of Bacon: "Prosperity is the blessing

of the Old Testament (that is, of Judaism); adversity is the blessing of the New Testament (that is, of Christianity)." We have, however, seen that these alleged differences and oppositions are false. They are probably false on both sides, for a vast number of Christians would now deny the frequent Jewish assertion of my boyhood, that Christianity declares this world to be, and always intended to be, a vale of tears. What the sober and temperate adherents of both religions would, I think, assert, what sober and temperate Jews would, I feel sure, assert, is, that a right place in their religion is given to both worlds. Perhaps, however, Judaism has been less inclined (in spite of the secular persecutions to which the Jews have been subjected) ever to regard this world or this life as under the rule of any imaginary devil rather than of the One God. This life has an end in itself, though it is also a preparation for another. Jewish teaching has been most wholesome when it has thought least of the teaching of its rival. It has been at its best when it has not been looking with one eye at itself and with one eye at Christianity. When this squinting process has taken place, Jewish teaching has sometimes been perverted and made one-sided in supposed contrast to Christianity. It is not true Judaism, so far as this life is concerned, to regard prosperity as the sole and only divine blessing. And it is not true Judaism (as I have said elsewhere) to depreciate or deny the value of all asceticism. The old Rabbi quoted in Chapter XV. knew better and said truer than that. We may, however, rightly say that the sanctification of life by the taming and hallowing of human instincts, passions and desires rather than by their disuse and excision (whether it be or no a doctrine of Christianity) is an

essential feature, a cardinal doctrine, of Judaism. Thus, to take a salient point, Judaism places marriage above celibacy. The reproductive instincts are also to be tamed and used in the service, and to the glory, of God. And in the sanctification of life and in the service of God man is to find—and will find—not mere perpetual struggle and pain, but highest satisfaction and happiness.

Now this theory of life can be interpreted in more than one way—in a low way or a high way. Perhaps, also, there may be said of it that, like many other high and difficult ideals, it is easily capable of degeneration.

It might be contended that, as one part of its teaching, Judaism says: "Use your instincts; hallow them; be happy." The result is that there is a tendency to think that when you live an ordinary, decent life, honest to your neighbours, faithful to your wife, kindly to your children, giving them and yourself good dinners and a "good time," you are living an admirable Jewish life, and that there is nothing more to be said or to be done. In this way ideals tend to disappear; idealism tends to vanish, and the conception of Judaism and of religion tends to be cheapened, degraded and caricatured. For in truth there is a good deal more to be both said and done. But just because Judaism lays down one ideal for all men, refusing to allow that some men and women are to be "in religion" and some "in the world," but asserting that all are to be "in" the world, though not "of" the world, is there so much danger lest the ideal be insensibly lowered and obscured. For the existence of a class of men and women set apart to live a life of special difficulty and holiness, of special privations and hardships,

of special sacrifice and self-surrender, may have two opposite effects upon the general mass of men and women who live without. It may make them say or feel: "Well, religion and ideal morality are provided for by these holy men and women: they live a life dedicated to the glory of God; that is their *métier*; we are *in* the world, and we need not do anything like *that*; our ideal is rightly and properly a much lower one; in fact, if we live decently and respectably, we may enjoy ourselves in comfort and ease." And so they *do* enjoy themselves, and the ideal becomes lower and lower, and the service of God, which *they* think is demanded of *them*, becomes poorer and more poor.

On the other hand, the existence of the dedicated class, who live for the service of man and of God, may have quite another effect. It may make the men and women of the world remember what the ideal is; it may make them, at all events, acknowledge that that ideal is not merely to be happy and comfortable, decent fathers, kindly husbands, law-abiding citizens, but that it is something far higher, harder and more comprehensive. It may, at any rate, make them reverence a goodness and a love which can never be wholly theirs, or it may make them admit and recognise that this goodness and love can be realised by other men and women, if it cannot be realised by themselves. And this recognition and reverence of the high ideal, as at least partly realised in actual men and women whom they honour and admire, may react upon their own lives, and help them to mount a little farther upward on the moral and spiritual hill.

Now Judaism puts the same ideal before all men; it asks that all, in their various degrees, should seek to

realise it in their lives. Let us, therefore, remember that this ideal is not something low or average or easy, but high, difficult, unattainable. Judaism teaches that the highest love of God and the best service of him are not easy, but hard. Judaism teaches that men must renounce and endure in order to achieve and to perform. It does not teach that sainthood is easy; it does not suppose that many can attain to it. Those who give up all for God and the Highest can only, and will always, be few.

A religious community, in order to be healthy, must, as I have elsewhere said, produce and possess its saints. But it can only do so if its ideals are high.

And this leads me to speak of a supposed difference between Judaism and Christianity, the observation and emphasis of which by Jews has not always been to the advantage of Judaism.

Judaism has always put forward ideals. In old days—for example, in the Pentateuch—it tended to make the ideal a law, and perhaps there has been something of this identification ever since. The moral law to Judaism has not been the minimum of morality, as Mr. Westermarck seems to hold that it is and it must be, but the maximum of morality. For to Judaism the Law is not merely a series of enactments which, if not observed, can be enforced, but it is an ideal which is, and always must be, unattainable. It includes not merely "the commandments of duty," but "the free and lofty aspiration to live up to," or live towards, an ideal which, even though unattainable, yet demands from man a constant struggle to draw as near to it as he can.[1]

[1] Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. i. p. 153. Quoted in my *Synoptic Gospels*, vol. ii. p. 98.

The Pentateuchal law "be ye holy," the Rabbinic law "imitate God," are not mere commands: they are ideals.

If the ideal were not above us, and beyond our attainment, how could we progress? If a man thinks he has attained moral and religious perfection, what a self-righteous fool he must be! Surely

> A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?

Our ideals must, then, be in their fullness unattainable, or they are no true ideals.

But here some Jewish critics begin to cavil. They say: "There are ideals and ideals. The right ideal must be at least capable of partial realisation by all. We all know that none can love God perfectly. We all know that none can be perfectly holy. But all can love God somewhat: all can be somewhat or fairly holy." And in addition to this I think they would say: "The ideal must be extremely broad: 'be holy,' 'love God,' 'love man.' It must not enter into details." They would, I feel sure, say: "An ideal which none can realise might serve for angels; it is no good for man." Or again: "An ideal is no good (and that is why it must be so broad) if only some men can fulfil or seek to fulfil it. An ideal must be an ideal for all. All must aspire to it; all must be able to mount at least the lowest rungs of its ladder."

Now, how did Jewish critics come to make these criticisms? They came to make them, because in the Gospels Jesus sets up ideals which his followers say are higher and nobler than the laws and ideals of the Old Testament in general and of the Pentateuch in particular. And the Jewish critics

have been at pains to show that these supposed higher and nobler ideals are unsuited for mankind, impossible of attainment. Or again: they are not ideals for *all*, because only a very few can even *seek* to fulfil them.

I will mention here two of these ideals—perhaps the most important two—as examples. Jesus declares: "Every one that does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." In other places he seems to lay down the principle of complete self-denial and self-surrender. The Jewish critics say: "Self-denial is an ideal. But self-denial in the sense of being a celibate, or of giving away all your possessions, is not an ideal, for not only can all men not be celibates and give up all their possessions, but it is not desirable that any should do so. The ideal is both impracticable (because it is not universal) and it is also false (because it is undesirable)."

I am not sure that the Jewish critics are right. Who is to say where the ideal of self-denial is to end? Who is to say where, in any particular case, so much self-denial is good and a little more is wrong? May it not be that for some few persons it *is* better *not* to marry; that some can serve God and man better unmarried than married? I do not see that this is by any means impossible or unlikely. And even though, in our present social order, to give away all one's possessions may be inadvisable—to use them well, the Jewish critics might rightly say, is the higher and better ideal—one may, in a sense not sophistical, renounce them all, even though one still possesses them. A man may reduce his personal requirements to a minimum: a man may become more and more independent of

outward things. Who shall say to what extent, in any individual case, this renouncement should be or may be carried ?

Jesus, therefore, was, I think, wrong if he meant that no one who does not give away all his possessions can be a true lover of God and man. He was, however, not wrong in making of self-denial and renouncement an ideal, to which no limits can rightly be assigned.

" Self-denial is good." That is acknowledged by Jew and Christian alike. But let us take great care that the broad maxim or ideal of self-denial, which the Jewish critics admit and approve, is not made so broad that it fails to influence. Self-denial is good, but self-denial in what ? May it not be self-denial in possessions, self-denial in things you like, self-denial in outward success ?

I hope that Jewish parents and teachers may reflect on these queries and on the difficulties which they imply.

Again, self-denial for whom or for what ? And with this I shall gradually come to my second ideal. I suppose the answer can only be : for oneself, or for others, or for God.

It is a curious feature of Jewish criticism of Christianity (but it may conceivably be both curious and true) that it attacks Christian teaching on two opposite grounds. Christian teaching is, on the one hand, too selfish, on the other hand, it is impossibly altruistic.

It is alleged that the Christian motive for all this self-denial is personal salvation. And the Jewish critics say (or in my boyhood they used to say) that we are not to bother about our own salvation. Let us help others and do our duty, and our salvation

will come of itself. We can leave it to God. And it is quite true that if a man were to say: "I do not myself desire to help my neighbour or to lead a life of self-denial. I hate it. But I believe it will secure me a seat in heaven, and therefore I will practise self-denial, though sorely against the grain," he would justly be despised. And possibly the insistence upon the immense importance of our earthly life, in view of the eternity which is to succeed it, may have actually led to such perversions of morality and of religion. But in itself the bidding to prepare for the eternal life is surely not ignoble or undesirable. The old Jewish Rabbi did not think so when he said, "Prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest (be allowed to) enter into the hall." The injunction, "Choose well, thy choice is brief and yet endless," may be exaggerated, for we believe in the ultimate enlightenment and beatitude of all, but it has, at any rate, its measure of truth. If there be another life, and if this life affects our well-being, or the stage at which we begin, in another life, would he not be a fool who did not determine to order his life on earth in conscious reference to his life beyond the grave? If he realises, as Judaism teaches he ought to realise, that the love of man is the best passport to heaven, he will be wholly free of the taint of selfishness. It is perfectly true that he is to trust God, and not to be always anxiously thinking: "What are my future prospects? How stands it with my soul? Will this line of action help me rather than that?" But it is also true that he is to consider and remember that for him, as for others, this life *is* the "preparation" for another. Now you do not "prepare for" a thing without from time to time thinking of the thing for which you are preparing.

You think of it in relation to yourself; you think of yourself in relation to it.

I do not therefore hold that there is much in this particular Jewish criticism, and I do not see much difference here between an enlightened Judaism and an enlightened Christianity. "Prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the hall" is good Jewish teaching and it is good Christian teaching. Neither religion need, I fancy, go farther; both religions must, I fancy, go as far.

I come now a little nearer to the second example, where Christian teaching is said to be impossibly altruistic. A little nearer, but yet I cannot get to it quite at once.

I alluded before to the statement, which I used (if I remember right) to see in Christian books, that the God of Judaism was just, but that the God of Christianity was loving. Or, again, that the God of Judaism was righteousness, but that the God of Christianity is love. Jewish critics have met this criticism in two ways. The first, which is, I think, the true, way is that of denial. The God of Judaism is *both* righteousness *and* love. His love is never in conflict with his righteousness; his righteousness is never in conflict with his love. For God is One.

The second way in which the Jewish critics have met the Christian statement is, however, very different.

Whereas the Christians, in making the statement, mean to imply that the conception of the Godhead is nobler, truer, and higher in Christianity than in Judaism, inasmuch as love is higher and nobler than righteousness, the Jewish critics declare that the God of Judaism is indeed righteousness, for righteousness is superior to love.

Which is correct? Is love better than righteousness, or is righteousness better than love? Is perfect righteousness superior to perfect love, or is perfect love superior to perfect righteousness?

What I fancy the Christians mean is, that love is superior to righteousness, because love is more *active*. Love seeks out; love eagerly desires to save and help and give. Love renounces and sacrifices. Love is ever anxious to do and to aid: it yearns to fight and to redeem. Love makes allowances and pities; love consoles and comforts; love cares and forgives. Love suffers gladly; love endures for the sake of the beloved. Love bears another's burden. Love, in fact, *loves*. Love gives up itself. Love is willing to renounce and to die.

Righteousness does the right and correct thing at every juncture and on all occasions. But does it go out of its own way to help and succour, to forgive and pity and redeem? If not, love is higher than righteousness, and the yearning compassion and the infinite goodness of God must be less akin to righteousness than to love. There is no word which expresses the divine goodness so well as that one simple monosyllable. No sentence can express the divine nature so truly as those three short words: God is love.

But the Jews say: love is emotional; love is partial. What sins have not been committed in the name of love! What evil results have not ensued from the false estimates, and the foolish actions, dictated by love!

Righteousness is goodness, which is wise, which looks before and after, which reflects and judges and weighs. Righteousness includes justice—that great virtue, the full supremacy of which would mean the advent of the Golden Age. Love is a feeling, and

the feelings need not and cannot be dictated to. They will go and come of themselves. But let men nerve themselves and strain themselves to the knowledge and the doing of justice and righteousness—justice and righteousness to one and to all: let this be done, and the Messianic Era will have arrived. And the virtue which, if fully, consistently and persistently practised by men, would mean the advent of the Golden Age—*that* virtue must be the highest! That virtue is the divinest of all. And if we have to describe the nature of God by a single word, how can we do better than to say: God is righteousness? He *is* that virtue, which, if men but practised it to the full, would mean the removal of all wrongdoing and selfishness, the removal of every evil, and the accomplishment of constant rectitude and goodness. The perfect God is perfect righteousness.

The Church with its ideal of love has been in power for sixteen hundred years. Oh for sixteen centuries of the rule of justice! Social reform would then achieve its term. The ideals of the prophets would be realised.

It seems to me that there is a good deal in what the Christians say and a good deal in what the Jews say. I do not mind myself which way you put it, so long as you will allow me to include in *my* ideal *both* righteousness *and* love. Either say that perfect righteousness is loving and eager, and that it does all the things which the Christians affirm that love does, or say that perfect love is wise and righteous, and that it does all the things which righteousness does according to the Jews. The human ideal must be loving righteousness, or righteous love. And God himself must be the perfection of both.

Apart from the suggestion of controversy, the Jews are, rightly enough, as I think, by no means chary of using the word "love." The command to love God follows the declaration of the divine Unity in the *Shema*, accepted by all Jews, Conservative and Liberal, as the corner-stone of the Jewish faith. And from Jewish pulpits, no less than from Christian pulpits, you may hear the human ideal summed up as "the love of man and the love of God." But it is only, as I think, fair to state that that aspect of love of which I have just spoken—the *active* aspect, in virtue of which love goes forth, and gives freely, and yearns to help and to save, in virtue of which it seeks to succour and redeem the sinner, and is ever ready to renounce, to sacrifice and to endure—is largely associated with, and strongly emphasised by, the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. It is not only, as I think, accurate and fair to say this, but I should not be afraid (need we ever be afraid of the truth?) of saying this to children. Nor would I be afraid to tell them that one of the noblest pæans on love ever written by human hands is that which says of it: "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

And I would even add that this great pæan was written by a Jew named Paul! Why should we be afraid, for is not this love suitable and desirable for Judaism? Does it conflict with it? Does it not rather harmonise with it? So that I would not mind repeating to our children the story of that Spanish

Jew, Dr. Nunes, who, according to Wesley, was wont to say that he wished the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (wherein the pæan on love is found) were written in letters of gold, and that every Jew were to carry it with him wherever he went. And perhaps if to the ideal of love were added the ideal of righteousness, I would agree with Dr. Nunes when he said (herein, says Wesley, judging rightly), "that this single chapter contained the whole of true religion."

So much, then, as to the ideals of righteousness and of love. They constitute the goal. The ideal for man is not merely to be a kindly father, a faithful husband and a law-abiding citizen, but it is the ideal of perfect righteousness and perfect love. This is the ideal—the Jewish ideal—towards which we must strain and strive and struggle, and of which even the best of us must fall short.

And now for the second example in which Christian teaching is sometimes said by Jewish critics to be impossibly and undesirably altruistic.

The Law speaks, we are told, to men, and in the language of men. It bids men love their neighbours as themselves. Whether when a man gives his life for his friend, or whether when, as in a fire, a man even sacrifices his life to save some one unknown to him, he does not love his neighbour *more* than he loves himself, I will not inquire. Such sacrifice of his life, such love of another, whether it be *as* of himself or *more* than himself, would be equally ordered and commended by both Christian and Jewish ethics.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," says the Jewish Law. Even more: "Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself," or, if we translate it as some

scholars think it should be translated, the bidding of the Law becomes still more impressive: "Thou shalt love the foreign settler in thy midst as thyself." For this is a law which men find it exceedingly difficult to fulfil: it is an ideal which they find it exceedingly hard to admit or to attempt. It is the law, or the ideal, which all anti-Semitism conspicuously violates, contemns and denies. Certainly many Christian nations, and an enormous number of Christians, have very much to learn yet from that Law which they suppose to be obsolete and superseded! It is hardly for them to claim that they possess a higher law, a higher ideal, when they so conspicuously violate the lower law, the lower ideal—if lower indeed it be. Perhaps the possession of a supposed Best has been their enemy in the fulfilment of the Good.

But we must not let the sins of Christian nations and of individual Christians prevent us from estimating with judicial impartiality the worth of the Christian ideal.

What, then, does the Gospel say about love? Does it outstrip the law? It says: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that ill-treat you." It is these injunctions which the Christian regards as the crown and flower of the teaching of Jesus, and which the Jew criticises and depreciates.

I have discussed the command at length in my edition of the *Synoptic Gospels*, and I will now reproduce from that book some part of what I there said.

> The usual Jewish criticism of the injunction, "Love your enemies," is that it is paradoxical, impracticable and absurd. One never opens a Jewish book or pamphlet which deals with Jesus and the New Testament without this

invariable criticism. Thus, for example, Dr. Eschelbacher : "The Jewish law enjoined help and aid to be given to our enemies when in need. It says : 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.' The Jewish sages urged : 'Say not, I will do to him as he has done to me ; I will render to the man according to his work.' And again : 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat ; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.' But Judaism has not ordered us to *love* our enemies. It has regarded such a command as unfulfillable. It has considered that the emotion of *love* towards those who curse, hate, revile, and seek to destroy us, is impossible. The very *demand* for such a feeling is, perhaps, not even good. For even self-denial has its limits : to fight is sometimes not only a necessity, but also a duty. One can only legitimately ask that such a fight should be exclusively directed towards wicked, threatening and powerful antagonists ; there must be no attack upon the conquered, the weak and the needy. These, on the contrary, must be rendered every helpful support and assistance. Such good deeds may then lead on to friendly feelings and reconciliation. And the Christian command to 'love the enemy' has not led to any higher, nobler deeds towards him than these."

It is, in fact, contended by Jewish critics that the defect in the ethical teaching of Jesus is that it is strung so high that it has failed to produce solid and practical results just where its admirers vaunt that it differs from, and is superior to, the ethical teachings and standards of the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Rabbis. . . . The bow is so bent that it snaps altogether.

The history of Christianity, so the Jewish writers urge, is a proof that their criticism of the teaching of Jesus is well founded. For how often, they tell us, do we not hear Lessing's statement repeated, in one form or another, that Christianity has been tried for eighteen hundred years, but that the religion of Jesus remains to be tried ? What does this mean but a confession that the teaching of Jesus, in its most novel and striking features, has remained virtually untried ; that its injunctions are a dead letter ? But the history of Europe